

Cabinet approves \$15 million loan to buy wheat

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday approved a loan agreement with the United States government under which the U.S. will grant Jordan a \$15 million loan to purchase 70,000 tonnes of American wheat. Under the agreement, Jordan will settle the loan over a period of 21 years at an interest rate of three per cent, with five years grace period. The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker also approved the appointment of Abdullah Shobaki as director general of the Zakat (alms) Fund as of Feb. 15. The Cabinet also decided to accept a DM 5 million grant from the German Development Bank to finance environment projects. The Council of Ministers also approved the formation of three delegations to attend meetings of the executive board of the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development which will be held in Tunis today, the Middle East Food Exhibition which will be held in Bahrain from Jan. 13 to 16 and the board of governors of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which will be held in Rome from Jan. 15 to 17.

Jordan Times

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Jordanian has the pleasure to announce that its new Information Center at QAIA is now operational 24 hours a day.

Any information concerning the movement of its fleet to and from Amman could be obtained through Tel # 08/53200. Meanwhile, information concerning flights of other carriers could be obtained through DCA Tel # 08-53070 / 08-53250

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King receives Saudi message, invitation Saud Al Faisal: Common basis for sound relations established

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein conferred Tuesday with visiting Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal who conveyed to him a message from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and discussed with him Saudi-Jordanian relations.

The King and the visiting minister held a closed door meeting and later were joined by officials on both sides. The discussions covered bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern to the two countries.

During the meeting Prince Saud renewed King Hussein's invitation to King Hussein to visit Saudi Arabia.

Prince Saud, the first senior Saudi official to visit Jordan in five years, said: "I'm glad to report that a

common basis for building a solid foundation for our relationship has been established.

"There is a common and clear view of the basis on which we will build relations between the two countries," he told reporters after two hours of talks with the King. "Our contacts will continue on issues of interest to our region," the prince said.

Prince Saud, who returns home Wednesday, said he "presented His Majesty with the compliments of his brother, King Fahd. The message I have carried is a message of goodwill, concentrating on the bilateral relations between the two countries."

Prince Saud, who held separate meetings with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister

Abdul Karim Kabariti, said he also discussed the situation in Iraq.

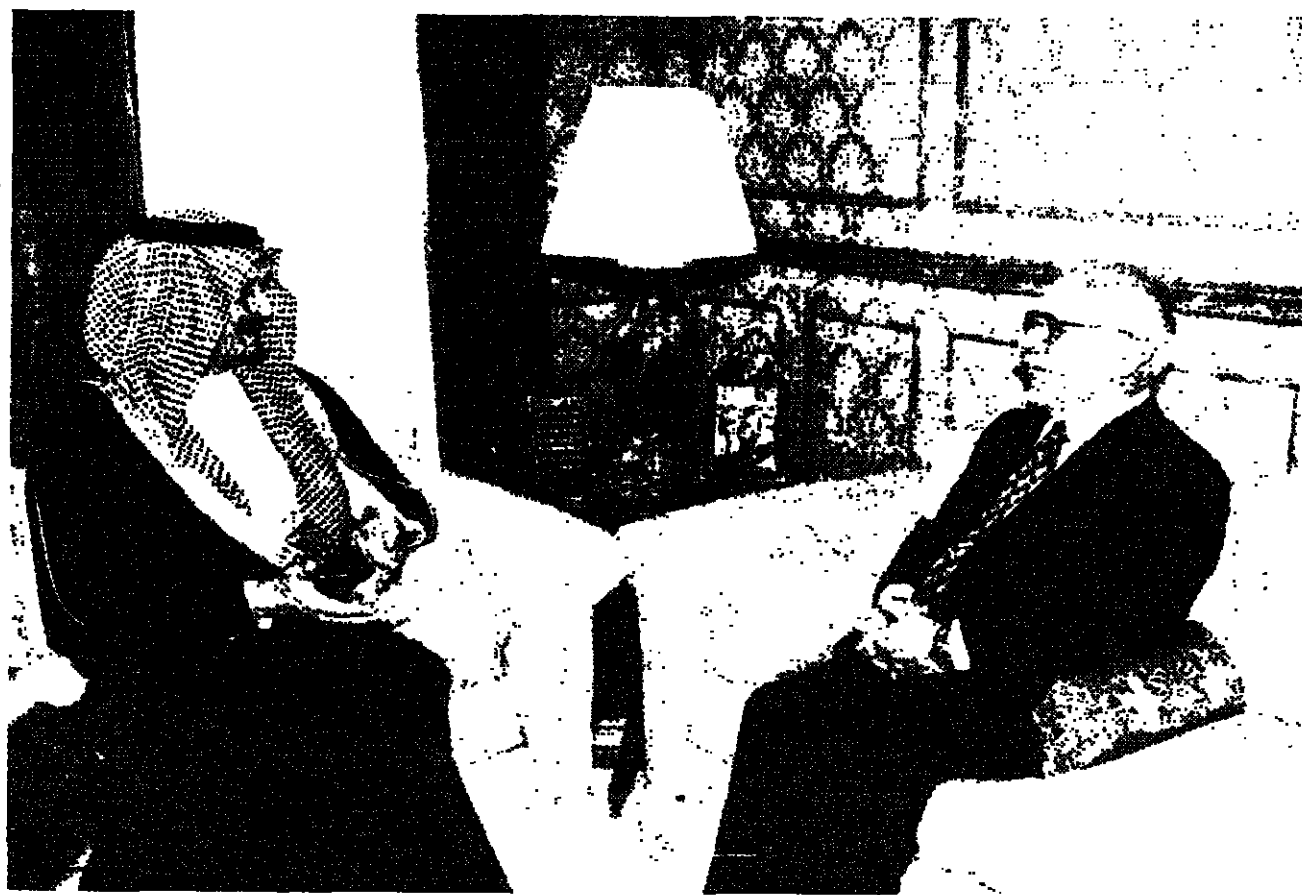
"Words can't express our hopes for the return of this country, whose misery has prolonged to the Arab and international folds," he said after a 30-minute meeting with the prime minister. "We sympathise with the people of Iraq."

In an arrival statement, Prince Saud blamed the Baghdad government for the continued suffering of Iraqis under U.N. trade sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

"The responsibility falls first and foremost on the Iraqi leadership, which should implement all international resolutions, including those which would lead to ending the suffering of the Iraqi people," he said.

For the sanctions to be removed, Iraq must dismantle its weapons of mass destruction, account for some 600 Kuwaitis who disappeared during the seven-month occupation of Kuwait and pay war reparations.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Chief of Royal Court Marwan Al Qasem, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Hani Khalifeh, Jordan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. On the Saudi side the meeting was attended by the undersecretary of the Saudi foreign ministry for cultural and economic affairs and Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Jordan.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday confers with visiting Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal at the Royal Court (Photo by Yousef 'Allan')

'Jordanian-Saudi relations strong, brotherly'

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday expressed extreme satisfaction with the visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal. In an exclusive interview with the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), King Hussein described Jordanian-Saudi relations as strong and brotherly, and said Jordan has always felt proud of its relations with Saudi Arabia.

In reference to the strain in relations with Saudi Arabia following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, King Hussein said that "relations in the near past caused harm to Jordan as it did to our

brothers. It also pained us, as it did them."

The King expressed satisfaction also that relations were being restored to normal and expressed Jordan's keen interest in maintaining unique relations with Saudi Arabia.

"Praise be to the Almighty God that this stage of our life has ended and that things are back to how they should be," the King said. He said Jordan has strong resolve that relations between the two Kingdoms should be based on confidence, frankness, and clarity. Asked about Jordan's position towards Iraq, and the Jordanian-Saudi views on this issue, King Hussein said

the issue of Iraq was important in terms of its humanitarian dimension and the "concern for a dear country to all of us, in terms of the genuine desire to see an end to this tragedy and the suffering of the Iraqi people."

King Hussein said Jordan was very keen on maintaining the unity of Iraq and its sovereignty on all its territories. Asked about certain Arab parties that cast doubt on Jordan's position regarding Iraq, the King said such parties did not see the real situation in Iraq. Recent election in Iraq have shown a perpetuation of the present situation, in terms of dividing the Iraqi territory, he said. The King called on the

Iraqi people to meet together, cooperate and stay united. He pledged every possible support for the Iraqi people in order to be able to exercise their right to live united on their national soil, by their own volition and to select the form of government or life they themselves want. He said he hoped the suffering of the Iraqi people would not last any longer.

On U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry's visit to Jordan and U.S. weaponry to the army, King Hussein said that equipping the army was necessary not only to defend Jordan but also to defend the region, whenever their help is needed.

King condoles French people

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday expressed his deepest condolences to the French people and the family of former French President Francois Mitterrand who died Monday. Speaking in a televised address broadcast by French television, King Hussein said the death of Mr. Mitterrand is considered a great loss, not only for France, but for the whole world. "We and you in France along with many around the world yesterday (Monday) lost a great man, a statesman ... and a dear friend for me," King Hussein said. "For me he was an example to follow, a man of principle who had devoted his life not only to serve his country, but the whole world," the King said. He said Mr. Mitterrand's contributions to Europe will always be remembered as well as his friendship with the peoples of the Middle East.

Arabs condemn Israeli plans to 'Judaize' Jerusalem

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab countries sheltering Palestinian refugees on Tuesday condemned what they called Israel's plans to increase its hold on the disputed city of Jerusalem. Representatives from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, the PLO and the Arab League condemned "Israel's seizure of land in Jerusalem and its celebrations for the 3000th anniversary of the city, which is a falsification of history." Israel captured and annexed Arab East Jerusalem in 1967 and declared the holy city its united capital, for which it has failed to secure international recognition.

'Israeli-Syrian talks to resume Jan. 21'

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Israel and Syrian have agreed to hold a new round of peace talks on Jan. 21, a Western diplomat here said Tuesday. The diplomat said the negotiations would resume after a shuttle mission between Damascus and Jerusalem by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher due to begin Wednesday.

Israel heads for early elections

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Leaders of Israel's ruling coalition and the right-wing opposition suggested Monday they were close to agreement on calling elections before their scheduled October date. Raanan Cohen and Moshe Katsav, the parliamentary leaders of the ruling Labour Party and opposition Likud, respectively, told an Israeli radio interviewer they both favoured early elections in principle.

King visits Tel Aviv today

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein will today pay a one-day visit to Israel for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres on bilateral relations and the implementation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

King Hussein will also take part in the inauguration of a wing in a Tel Aviv hospital named after the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and visit two Jordanian army officers currently receiving treatment in an Israeli hospital.

These are air force pilot Mohammad Al Atout who was injured in a helicopter incident and Nabil Momani who was injured by a shrapnel while serving with the U.N. peace-keeping forces in Croatia.

Following the visit to Tel Aviv the King will visit Beit Gibril near the Lake Tiberias where he will attend a ceremony for honouring Fayez Tarawneh, Jordan ambassador to the U.S., and Elyakem Rubenstein, the heads of the Jordanian and Israeli delegations to the peace talks.

The ceremony will be attended by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher as well as Mr. Peres.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, on the eve of the King's visit, Jordan's Ambassador to Israel Marwan Muasher de-

scribed the visit as an important step on the road to building healthy relations between the two countries.

Noting that the visit coincides with progress on the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations and just before the Palestinian general elections next week, Dr. Muasher said that all these steps and developments contribute to the creation of a very positive climate needed for a permanent and comprehensive peace.

In assessing Jordanian-Israeli relations and the progress in the implementation of the provisions of the peace treaty last year, Dr. Muasher said that the two sides succeeded in finalising all the agreements provided for in the treaty noting that the two sides will sign the last set of agreements on Jan. 18 in Aqaba.

After the signing of the agreements, the two sides will direct their effort towards putting these accords in practice in order to create a new climate that would further bolster peace, Dr. Muasher said.

He said that the most important agreement was that which covers economic relations that entail normalising trade and transport which in turn will open the way for direct trade between Jordan and Israel and Jordan and

Palestine, and which will also allow the Jordanian goods to be marketed in the self-rule areas for the first time since 1967.

Not only will these agreements benefit trade but they will also open the way for investments in Jordan and also for Israeli-Jordanian joint ventures, he said.

Referring to achievements so far, Dr. Muasher said that the two sides have recently embarked on implementing joint projects in tourism and agriculture, which he said are bound to boost the Jordanian economy, adding that these projects are being implemented by the private sectors of the two sides. He said that most of these projects are being implemented in Jordan.

He added the Israeli and the Jordanian governments are jointly carrying out a Dead Sea minerals project which would allow Jordan to extract bromine and the creation of the Aqaba-Eilat airport.

Dr. Muasher pointed out that the two sides last year completed the infrastructure of these joint ventures adding that the production work is expected to start soon.

Referring to the transport agreement which is still to be signed this month, Dr.

(Continued on page 7)

2,000 reported held

Chechen rebels demand Dudayev reinstated

MOSCOW (Agencies) — The leader of the Chechen guerrillas who took up to 2,000 people hostage in the town of Kizlyar on Tuesday demanded that Moscow recognise Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev or face further bloodshed.

"Until Russia recognises General Dudayev as president of the republic of Checheva-Ichkeria, ... Kizlyar will be repeated," Sal-man Raduyev said on Russian national television.

The Dagestani town of Kizlyar, where the hostages were being held in a hospital, could be turned into "a burning hell" if Russian troops try to dislodge the rebels, he said.

Mr. Raduyev said he had more than 500 guerrillas with him.

Mr. Dudayev, a Soviet general, was elected president of his native Chechenya in 1991, at the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union, and declared the tiny Muslim republic independent from Russia.

In December 1994, Russian troops launched a huge

assault to topple Mr. Dudayev, but ran into ferocious resistance and have failed to quell the independence movement in more than a year of war.

Mr. Raduyev, shown wearing camouflage jacket and a green Islamic headband, said "we are carrying out General Dudayev's orders and we are ready to carry out any of his orders."

He said that the raid on the town, which is just inside Dagestan near the border with Chechenya, had been planned against a military airport and a barracks and said it was "not a terrorist act."

But he did not explain why the hostages were taken. "According to our intelligence, eight helicopters were to have arrived on this base yesterday with ammunition for the Russian army in Chechenya. We just wanted to destroy this base as well as the barracks," he said.

"Unfortunately we only found three helicopters and one armoured vehicle. In half an hour this base was destroyed," he added.

Russian news agencies said

that two helicopters had been destroyed at the air base at dawn Tuesday, but gave no further details.

Meanwhile, the interior ministry was quoted by Interfax news agency as saying that troops had taken control of the area around the hospital and were "mopping up" resistance in the streets.

The town was totally blocked off and journalists were barred entry, Russian NTV television said.

President Boris Yeltsin, facing a re-run of last June's bloody hospital siege at Budennovsk that took the Chechen conflict beyond the rebel region's borders, blamed ministers and officials and promised "resolute action."

"The ministries, the government and the (Russian) security council have drawn few lessons from previous events," Mr. Yeltsin told an extraordinary meeting of ministers convened to tackle the crisis. "We have been dealt another blow."

He added: "The border

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Donors pledge \$865m to Palestinians

PARIS (AFP) — Donor countries pledged \$865 million in economic aid to the newly autonomous Palestinian territories at a conference here Tuesday attended by representatives of some 50 nations.

"This is a strong signal from the international community," French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette told a press briefing winding up a conference of donor countries on economic development in the territories.

"If we add these 865 million dollars to the money pledged since 1993 but so far not used, we get to at least 1.365 billion dollars," Mr. De Charette said.

The money is to be disbursed by March 1997.

"This conference is a step in the peace process. Development brings peace," he added.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjoern Tore Godal said the conference had drummed up even more pledges than the \$1.5 billion which had been expected.

Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat thanked the donor countries and expressed hope that "the pledges will be kept."

A "tripartite action plan," setting out rights and duties in managing economic assistance to the Palestinians, was signed by Mr. Arafat and foreign ministers Ehud Barak of Israel and Bjoern Tore Godal of Norway for the donor nations.

Under the plan, Israel will turn over value-added tax (VAT) incomes and customs duties to the Palestinian National Authority and facilitate free border passage of men and merchandise.

Earlier Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador Pamela Harriman said the United States was pledging \$71 million in development aid to the autonomous Palestinian territories.

"We have allocated \$47 million to critical water and sanitation projects in Gaza, Hebron, Tulkarem, Qalqilya," Ms. Harriman said.

She was reading a speech which U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had been scheduled to give. He was prevented from travelling to the Paris conference by

a snow storm in Washington. "Another six million dollars will be targeted on private sector development through the establishment of industrial zones. And eight million has been assigned for building and upgrading Palestinian educational facilities," she continued.

In addition, the United States will provide the Palestinian National Authority with \$10 million to round out the Palestinian budget deficit in 1996.

Ms. Harriman added that the deficit was estimated at \$75 million dollars, compared with \$101 million in 1995. The United States hoped Palestinians would have in place a balanced budget by 1997, she said.

The U.S. Defence Department will make a further gift of 200 vehicles for the Palestinian police.

At the first donors' conference in 1993, the United States pledged to provide Palestinians with \$500 million over a five-year period. It has since released more than \$160 million.

Ms. Harriman added that: "The purpose of this conference is clear: to reinforce the peace process by reinvigorat-

ing the international community's economic and political support for the Palestinian people."

The international community is now aiming "to shift our focus from the short-term challenge of creating Palestinian institutions to the longer-term goal of promoting economic growth and development," the statement added.

Italian Foreign minister Susanna Agnelli, whose country currently chairs the rotating presidency of the European Union, said the EU would contribute about 40 per cent of the aid package.

Delegates at the conference said the pledges, made 10 days ahead of elections in the autonomous Palestinian territories, come at a crucial time for PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who has faced enormous economic difficulties in the last two years and an explosive social situation.

The package was expected to be used mainly for investment projects involving housing and infrastructure, but \$75 million were to go towards the 1996 budget in the territories.

Palestinians issue warrant for suspected informer

GAZA CITY (AP) — The Palestinian attorney general issued a warrant Tuesday for the arrest of a Gaza City contractor suspected of having delivered a booby-trapped cellular phone that killed chief Palestinian bomb-maker Yehiya Ayyash.

Several Palestinians are already under arrest in connection with last Friday's assassination, the attorney general, Khaled Kidreh, told the Associated Press. "The interrogation is in an advanced stage," Mr. Kidreh said, but would not comment further.

Palestinian investigators, quoted by Israeli media, have said the fugitive building con-

tractor, Kamal Hamad, was a longtime informer for Israel's Shin Bet security service.

One report said a Palestinian collaborator involved in Mr. Ayyash's death received \$1 million cash and a fake passport from his handlers to allow him to start a new life abroad.

On Tuesday afternoon, Palestinian police seized Mr. Hamad's two-story villa in Gaza City.

Journalists were ordered to leave the area after police-men entered the villa. Photographers were not allowed to take pictures.

Palestinian security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that

two nearby unfinished high-rise apartment buildings belonging to Mr. Hamad will also be confiscated.

Israel has neither denied nor confirmed Palestinian charges that it assassinated Mr. Ayyash, who orchestrated seven suicide bombings in Israel that killed 55 people since 1994.

Mr. Ayyash, nicknamed "the engineer" for his bomb-making skills, had been hiding since last summer in the home of a college friend, Osama Hamad, a nephew of the contractor, Kamal Hamad.

Osama Hamad lives in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahia, close to the Erez

crossing between Israel and Gaza.

Osama Hamad said Monday he received the rigged cellular phone from his uncle, Kamal, married to three wives and a father of 18 children. The contractor has apparently left Gaza, with some reports saying he is in the United States and others that he is hiding in Israel.

Mr. Kidreh, the attorney general, said he would try to bring Mr. Hamad back to Gaza at all costs, including seeking his extradition.

Mr. Kidreh said he has not formally asked Israel to hand over the fugitive.

(Continued on page 7)

EU observers: Israel hindering Palestinian election campaign

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — European election monitors criticised Israel Tuesday for slapping travel restrictions on Palestinians during the ongoing campaign for historic Palestinian elections later this month.

Carl Lidbom, head of the European Union (EU) team monitoring the Jan. 20 vote, complained that campaigning was being hindered by Israel's weekend decision to seal off Palestinian areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He also criticised Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) for not granting equal access to its radio and television stations to candidates independent of Mr. Arafat's Fatah movement.

Israel ordered the clamp-down after Islamic radicals vowed to carry out revenge attacks for the assassination Friday of Yehiya Ayyash, the mastermind behind a

wave of suicide bombings which killed 45 Israelis.

"It will not be acceptable to use security regulations for hindering the election campaign," Mr. Lidbom, a former Swedish justice minister, told a press briefing.

"Candidates and their party leaders must be able to travel to different parts of the country during the official campaign and the required permits must be made available," he said.

He also insisted that members of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission "also be able to travel quickly from area to area" to ensure a smooth election.

Mr. Lidbom, who on Jan. 1 issued a scathing criticism of the PNA for "arbitrarily" tampering with election procedures by unilaterally shortening the election campaign and altering the size of the self-rule council, this time called on Israel to take action to help ensure a fair

vote.

"The holding of the elections has been agreed on the highest political levels, so the means to implement this political decision must be found," he said.

Mr. Lidbom also called on Israel to guarantee a smooth election in east Jerusalem by reserving use of the area's post offices, to be used as polling stations, for voters only on the day of the election.

Keeping them open for regular trade would make "fair-minded people suspect this is simply intended to reduce the flow of voters to post offices and hinder the election process," Mr. Lidbom said.

"To close business for one day of the year is not asking too much," he said.

Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian central elections committee, told Reuters the Palestinian self-rule authority had asked Israel not to conduct other

business in the offices on election day to "prevent friction between Jewish extremists and Palestinian voters".

On the Palestinian side, Mr. Lidbom complained of Fatah's domination of the radio and television media.

"Arafat has better access to the media," he said. "We want the Palestinians to modify this situation, but time is against us and they (the media) cannot give a chance to all the candidates."

Nearly 700 candidates are running for the 88 council seats from the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, while two — Mr. Arafat and leftist activist Samiha Khalil — are contesting the post of executive president.

The campaign and vote are being monitored by 650 foreign observers, 300 of them from the European Union.



Are Hovdenak, an international observer from Norway, looks at a wall of Palestinian election posters Tuesday in Arab East Jerusalem. The majority of posters show a "keffiyeh" or headdress split down the middle and says, "No to splitting the unity of the people" and is printed by both Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). There are supposed to be some 600 international observers, 300 from the European Union and 300 others, that will participate in the first Palestinian elections on Jan. 20 (Reuters photo)

Israelis want to leave settlement near Hebron

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A group of Israelis living in a settlement near the West Bank city of Hebron want to leave, but the Israeli government says it cannot even consider aiding them until a final peace deal with the PLO.

Palestinians, who seek an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, have always labelled settlers an obstacle to peace and demanded they return to Israel.

Sima Mizrahi, a resident of the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba for the last 20 years, began organising a group that wanted to leave shortly after a local resident shot dead 29 Arabs at a mosque in nearby Hebron in February 1994.

"You see in my hand two lists of 120 families. There is another list which I don't have at the moment of another 50 to 60 families...300 people (who want to leave)," Ms. Mizrahi told Israeli radio Tuesday.

About 4,000 Israelis live in Kiryat Arba. Yossi Beilin, a minister in Prime Minister Shimon Peres' office, said he sympathised with the settlers' plight.

But Mr. Beilin said it was possible some settlements would end up under Israeli sovereignty in a final peace deal and Israelis in them would then have no reason to leave. Until a final map was drawn, there would be no help from the government.

"No, I don't see a way to help them before a border and a permanent agreement are determined," Mr. Beilin said.

Under the 1993 interim PLO-Israel peace deal the 130,000 Jews living amidst two million Arabs in the territories remain.

Their fate is to be negotiated in final talks to start in May. Kiryat Arba mayor Zvi Katzover was quoted by the radio as saying Ms. Mizrahi's numbers were inflated.

He barred a conference for people who wanted to leave that Ms. Mizrahi wanted to hold in the settlement's community centre.

"The community centre is for the good of the public...anyone who wants to hold conferences that harm the public...we cannot permit them to use the community centre," Mr. Katzover said.

More than a tonne of drugs seized in Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese police seized more than one tonne of drugs worth nearly \$10 million in two separate hauls, police sources said on Tuesday.

They said police found 1,000 kilograms of hashish near Hrajiel village in mountains northeast of Beirut on Monday night, worth an estimated \$1.5 million.

The hashish, hidden in a truck, was intended for export outside Lebanon, the police sources said. Eight suspects were arrested, they added.

In a separate haul, police confiscated 40 kilograms of heroin in the northern port of Tripoli worth about \$8 million, the sources said.

Two people suspected of involvement with the smuggling of the heroin from Turkey were arrested and a third suspect was still being sought, they added.

Lebanese authorities have launched a campaign against the cultivation, processing and trafficking of drugs since 1992. The illegal trade flourished during the 1975-90 civil war.

Israelis evenly split on Golan withdrawal

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A growing number of Israelis are willing to trade a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for a comprehensive peace treaty with Syria, according to a poll published Tuesday.

The poll, by Tel Aviv University's Centre for Peace Research, showed that 46.6 per cent of those queried favoured a full withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for full peace with Syria while 43.4 per cent opted for continued Israeli rule over the heights.

Ten per cent had no opinion in the survey which had a margin of error of four per cent.

When the same question was asked by the centre in August, 54.4 per cent favoured hanging on to the Golan, a strategic plateau seized by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed in 1981, while 33.8 per cent backed a land-for-peace trade.

The new survey also showed that 53 per cent of those questioned supported Prime Minister Shimon Peres' approach to peace negotiations with Syria and 62 per cent said his peace policies were in line with those of his assassinated predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin.

The poll was released a day before U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was due to being a new peace mission to Israel and Syria to promote the peace talks between the two nations which were resumed last month after a six-month break.

Campaign rival pledges to 'work together' with Arafat

NABLUS, West Bank (AFP) — Samiha Khalil, the 72-year-old grandmother and left-winger challenging Yasser Arafat in Palestinian elections, said Tuesday the PLO leader will keep wide powers even if she beats the odds to win.

"No one can push Abu Ammar aside," Ms. Khalil told 300 people at a campaign meeting, using Arafat's nom de guerre.

"He is the chairman of the PLO executive committee and I will work with him," she said. "He is a fighter and I am a fighter."

She is Mr. Arafat's only challenger for the head of the executive authority of the Palestinian self-government in the West Bank

and Gaza Strip in polls on Jan. 20 which will also elect an 88-member council of representatives.

"I like him. We will work together, all of us, and we will solve the problems together," Ms. Khalil said of Mr. Arafat.

Although at times she appeared to adopt a stoic stand, Ms. Khalil was animated and cracked frequent jokes during the two-hour appearance.

Women in the audience listened intently, while the men reacted with a mixture of admiration and bemusement.

Ms. Khalil studiously avoided criticism of Mr. Arafat, targeting her fire instead at his advisers.

"Until 1992, Arafat was walking

straight and I don't know what happened after that."

She sought to stake out a middle ground by opposing much of the Oslo accords signed in September 1993 which led to the launch of self-rule without rejecting the idea of peace with Israel.

She said she would like to "break the Oslo agreement in half," rejecting its failure both to evict 130,000 Jewish settlers from Gaza and the West Bank and mention Arab claims on East Jerusalem, annexed and captured by Israel in 1967.

The agreement had also failed to obtain the immediate release of thousands of prisoners from Israeli jails, she added.

But on the other hand Ms. Khalil welcomed the spread of Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"After Oslo the Palestinian flag was raised and the Israeli one lowered and that makes me happy. The Israeli withdrawal from the cities was also good."

Ms. Khalil took issue with the leading opposition movement, the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, for not accepting a two-state solution with Israel.

"Our national consensus has decided on the 1967 borders," she said. "The international community and the Arab and Islamic nations agree to this and this is the solution."

Beirut's mass of private media outlets must be cut — committee

BEIRUT (R) — The mass of private television and radio stations dominating Lebanon's airwaves since the civil war must be cut drastically, a media committee said on Tuesday.

The government-appointed Committee for Organisation of Television and Radio Broadcasting said the government should license five new private television stations and 10 private radio stations.

There are 57 private television stations and about 150 private radio stations currently broadcasting in Lebanon, many of them militia mouth-

pieces in the 1975-90 civil war which have gone commercial since.

The recommendations, read to reporters by information ministry Director-General Mohammad Obeid, said state television should be the only one to broadcast on ultra high frequency (UHF) and state-run radio the sole amplitude modulation (AM) broadcaster. Both stations do not need licensing.

The committee was established under a law organising the audiovisual media that came out in October 1994. All its recommendations need to be approved by the

cabinet.

Asked to name the stations that would receive licensing, Mr. Obeid said: "This is a matter to be decided by the cabinet."

Only major stations are expected to pass the stringent licensing requirements and the cut-throat competition between them for viewership.

The new media law regulates ownership of television and radio companies, sets broadcast guidelines, broadly defines tough licensing requirements and calls for a 10-member national council to supervise their work.

Egyptian actress fights back over nude photograph row

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian actress is suing two Islamic fundamentalist lawyers who are trying to get her jailed for appearing "practically nude" in a publicity photograph, the daily Al Misa reported Tuesday.

Yusra is accusing the lawyers of defamation after they said she "outraged public decency" by the photograph of her wearing a

bodice, which appeared on the cover of a film magazine in November.

The trial against the actress and three of the magazine's employees opened in the northern town of Dammanhur in December and is set to continue next month. The lawyers are asking for sentences of one year in jail.

The offending photograph is a still from Yusra's latest

film, the anti-fundamentalist "Birds of Darkness" which has been a huge hit in Egypt.

One of the lawyers, Abdul Fattah Al Waraql, said it was his duty as a Muslim to take action to prevent indecency.

Egypt's Islamic fundamentalists have launched a host of legal proceedings against intellectuals and film-makers opposed to their views.

Islamic Jihad chief threatens revenge for Israeli 'terrorism'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The new leader of the extremist Palestinian movement Islamic Jihad warned in an interview published Tuesday that Israel will pay "a heavy price" for the assassinations of its former chief Fathi Shakaki and the master Hamas bomb-maker Yehiya Ayyash.

Ramadan Shallah, who took over the Islamic Jihad after Mr. Shakaki was killed in Malta in October, told the Jerusalem Post that the slayings would "accelerate the jihad (holy war) and attacks against Israeli targets."

"The Israelis have to know that they should also pay a price for their terrorism," he said in the interview conducted with the English-language newspaper at the Islamic Jihad's office in Damascus.

"It will be a heavy price and will be as heavy as the assassination of both leaders, Ayyash and Shakaki," he said.

Islamic Jihad accuses

Israel's spy service Mossad of shooting Mr. Shakaki in Malta, while the Israeli internal security agency Shin Beth is suspected of the assassination of Mr. Ayyash, a militant of the fundamentalist Hamas movement who was killed by a booby-trapped cellular phone Friday in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has refused to comment directly on either murder, but Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said on Monday when asked about the Ayyash killing: "If somebody thinks that he can kill Israelis and Israel will remain indifferent, that's a slight exaggeration."

Hamas has also vowed to revenge Mr. Ayyash's killing with new anti-Israeli attacks. Mr. Ayyash, known as "the engineer" for his skill in bomb making, was held responsible for the deaths of 45 Israelis in a wave of suicide bombings.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 The First Steps
14:30 The Nature of Things
15:00 Bill Nye The Science Guy
15:30 Amazing Stories
16:00 Voyagers
17:00 Sophie et Virginie
17:30
18:00 Des Heros Ordinaires
19:00 Le Journal
19:15
Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30
19:35 Anything But A Laugh
20:00 The Nature of Things
20:25 The Bold And the Beautiful
21:10 Documentary — Tween
22:00 News in English
22:25 Prison
22:45 Drama — Airwolf
23:20 The Silk Road
00:30 Second Thoughts

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fair
06:32 (Sunrise) Dahu
11:43 Dhuhur
14:30 Asr
16:53 Maghrib
18:15 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweetfish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Ternaneta Church Tel. 622360
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
The Latter-Day Saints Church Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Church Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulkier supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Unstable weather conditions will prevail as temperatures are expected to drop with rain falling over all parts of the Kingdom and winds becoming southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

partly cloudy with scattered showers expected in all parts of the Kingdom. Winds will be southerly active and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 4/11
Aqaba 11/19
Deserts 3/12
Jordan Valley 10/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 13 Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 71 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Wafar Huzar 748563
Dr. Nidal Al-Dalab 692625
Dr. Jihad Sammour 755255
Dr. Bahjat Bakr 872642
First pharmacy 778336
Firdous pharmacy 637055
Al-Azma pharmacy 637055
Nairukh pharmacy 636772
Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 634945
Shimshani pharmacy 637660
Nairukh pharmacy 636972
Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Quni 281741
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shahn 985771
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 643402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 83021
Hotel Complaints 665800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information

(Directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 660101
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53240
Queen Alia Intl. Airport (08-53330)

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Jabal Amman Maternity 642962
Malthas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsan 607071
Shamsan Hospital 609131
University Hospital 845645
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227
The Islamic, Abdali 661273
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661146
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/25
Army-Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602300/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)963323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)969640
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)969640
Al Hama Modern Hospital (09)969640

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Jbn Al Nalees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Ilaia Hospital (03)614111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:00 Aqaba (RJ)
08:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00 Larnaca (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
12:30 New York (add) (RJ)
13:00 Jeddah (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:40 Istanbul (RJ)
17:55 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:05 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:05 Rome (RJ)
18:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:25 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
22:45 Aqaba (RJ)
23:20 Beirut (RJ)
00:10 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
09:30 Cairo (MS)
10:30 Jeddah (SV)
12:15 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
14:20 Algiers (AH)
20:00 Samna (TV)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
22:05 Larnaca (CY)
22:45 Athens (OA)
23:15 Amsterdam (KL)
23:59 London (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:30 Aqaba (RJ)
08:50 Jeddah (RJ)
10:35 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:15 Cairo, Jeddah (PK)
11:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
14:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
19:10 Colombo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:15 Aqaba (RJ)
20:25 New Delhi (RJ)

21:10 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 Samna (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
09:15 London (MS)
10:40 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Jeddah (SV)
13:25 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
15:20 Sharjah (AH)
21:00 Samna (TV)
21:00 Aden (DY)
22:50 Larnaca (CY)
00:25 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 600/600
Banana (Mukammal) 600/600
Banana (imported) 800/700
Cabbage 80/50
Carrot 120/50
Cauliflower 100/120
Cucumbers (large) 100/50
Cucumbers (small) 210/150
Eggplant 100/120
Garlic 850/600
Grape Fruit 220/150
Lemon 200/180
Marrow (large) 150/70
Marrow (small) 130/70
Onion (green) 100/100
Onion (dry) 300/150
Orange 550/400
Pepper (hot) 400/300
Pepper (sweet) 400/300



ACTORS HONOURED: His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday honoured the Nabil and Hisham Theatre Group by presenting them with the Istiqlal Medal of the First Order in recognition of their distinguished artistic work which the King said enhances the cultural and artistic movement in the country. Representing the theatre group in receiving the medal were Nabil Sawalha, Hisham Yanis and Amal Dabbas, who expressed their deep gratitude to the King and thanked him for his constant care and support for the Jordanian theatre arts movement. The Nabil and Hisham Theatre Group perform political comedy plays centred on themes taken primarily from current events in the Middle East.



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday receives visiting speaker of the Algerian provisional parliament Abdul Qader Ben Saleh at the Prime Ministry.

Premier receives Algerian official Ben Saleh says Kingdom's democratic process 'exemplary'

AMMAN (Petra)— Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker conferred in his office Tuesday with the speaker of the Algerian provisional parliament Abdul Qader Ben Saleh and reviewed with him Jordanian-Algerian relations, cooperation in parliamentary fields as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

Sharif Zeid stressed Jordan's keenness on promoting Algerian-Jordanian ties and wished Algeria further progress, security and stability.

Mr Ben Saleh backed Jordan's political roles at the regional and international levels and its support for Algeria's efforts to

establish democracy, describing Jordan's democratic process as exemplary for others in this region.

Mr. Ben Saleh also voiced his country's desire to bolster bilateral cooperation in all fields.

Speaking after the meeting with the prime minister, Mr. Ben Saleh said in a press statement that he briefed the prime minister on the latest developments in Algeria in the wake of the presidential elections held in that country on Nov. 16, and the formation of a new government that groups representatives of the various political groups.

Mr. Ben Saleh said that the situation in his country was improving day by day

following the presidential elections, which some Arabs considered as a turning point in Algeria's history.

He said certain political groups in Algeria are of the view that the country's political parties law should be revised because they believe that it was that law which triggered the regrettable incidents in Algeria.

Mr. Ben Saleh later met with the Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and discussed with him ways of promoting Jordanian-Algerian relations.

Mr. Ben Saleh is visiting Amman to take part in the Afro-Arab parliamentary conference, which ends today, Wednesday.

Jordan, Israel to sign 5 new agreements in Amman, Aqaba

by Amy Henderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel are tentatively scheduled to sign five bi-lateral agreements between Jan. 16 and 18 in Aqaba and Amman, an Israeli embassy official said. The signing of the agreements— transport, science and culture, telecommunications, maritime borders and Aqaba-Eilat cooperation — is awaiting the recuperation of Jordanian Minister of Transport Samir Kawar who recently suffered a heart attack. Shalom Tourgeman, Israeli press attaché, said.

Among the five agreements, the most significant are the transport agreement (to be signed in Amman) and the scientific and cultural agreement (to be signed in Aqaba along with the remaining three agreements). The former, said the official, is the "linchpin" of the bilateral agreements while the latter would make

official the process of "normalisation" of relations between the people of the two countries.

Jordan and Israel have, to date, signed eight cooperation agreements — energy, agriculture, security, combating drugs, boundaries, health, the environment, tourism and trade.

But, Mr. Tourgeman said, "what good is a trade agreement without a transport agreement, and what kind of tourism can we have if we can't move tourists easily? This binds most of our bilateral agreements."

The transport agreement lays out the details of land and air transport and also includes civil aviation. It allows the movement of goods to Israel or its ports, and specifies an arrangement for tourist transportation, allowing tourist transport vehicles to enter each country, but after arrival at Amman, Irbid or Aqaba, transport will be the responsibility of Jordanian transport companies.

Its provisions also include the movement of private vehicles with an international license across shared borders, but will not allow for the entry of rented vehicles or taxis.

Additionally, it calls for the creation of six daily bus routes between the two countries — Aqaba-Eilat, Tel Aviv-Amman, Haifa-Irbid, Amman, Haifa-Irbid, Nazareth-Amman and Nazareth-Irbid.

"The transport agreement also dictates that Israel and Jordan, as parties to the multilateral peace talks, improve and develop the infrastructure of a railway system for the middle East," he said. "This means a line (running between) Haifa, Irbid and Mafrag."

The agreements, meant to be signed no later than nine months following the ratification of the 1994 peace treaty, ran into snags during negotiations, putting them behind the schedule dictated by the treaty. The scientific and cultural agreement

was delayed because of disagreement over the subject of education while the transport agreement got stuck in drawing up the "technical details" of civil aviation, Mr. Tourgeman said. Jordanian officials said last month that a key difference was over the altitude at which Israel is willing to allow Jordanian aircraft to fly.

The scientific and cultural agreement has been a cause for much speculation and debate in the Kingdom as opposition groups reject normalisation of relations with the Jewish state. A main fear of some Jordanians was that any cultural agreement that included "educational reform" would result in what some newspapers and opposition parties have dubbed "rewriting history" in a way that would alter the terms of reference to Jordan's history with Israel. The government has dismissed these fears as unrealistic.

The only reference to

education in the pending agreement is a broad one calling for the "exchange of scientists, technical personnel or other experts on general or specific aspects such as technical/vocational education and training, plant and animal production, computers in education, information technology, archaeology and bio-technology."

Mr. Tourgeman said in an earlier interview with the Jordan Times that there is an "understanding on both sides" to change the educational systems of both, but that the issue would be left for future cooperation. The scientific agreement, as it stands, will be concluded for a four-year period. At the end of this period, it can be "modified or amended by mutual consent." The issue of education, Mr. Tourgeman said, can be reconsidered following the four-year period of the agreement's conclusion.

NSCP insists coffee is overpriced, proceeds with boycott campaign

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) Monday announced that it has obtained from official sources the international market rates on coffee, which also match the prices obtained by the Ministry of Supply.

But NSCP President Mohammed Obeidat said the ministry is still setting coffee prices on the local market at higher than international market figures.

He said that according to NSCP's figures, merchants import one tonne of "robusta" beans, after paying customs fees, at a cost of

\$2,200.

Therefore the price of one kilogramme of this type of coffee, which is now sold at JD 3.50, should not exceed JD 3.025.

As for "Brazilia" beans, the cost of importing one tonne of this type of coffee after paying fees is \$3,350, which should set the retail price at not more than JD 3.25, said Dr. Obeidat.

He said these figures were the result of analysis by the NSCP, which confirmed that the price of coffee on the Jordanian market is higher than it should be.

The coffee-boycott campaign, which the NSCP launched three weeks ago, was described by Dr. Obeidat as "very successful."

He added that as the campaign progressed more citizens joined in.

"People have become accustomed to the campaign to the extent that they are forgetting about buying coffee," he said.

Dr. Obeidat reiterated his position towards the "ministry's intervention in coffee pricing," saying the ministry should not further delay the society's dialogue with coffee merchants.

"The ministry is responsible for delaying our dialogue with merchants, although we are willing to openly discuss the subject with them," he said, referring to what he described as an apparent pressure by the ministry to discourage mer-

chants from contacts with the NSCP.

Economic writer Fahd Al Fanek said in an article in Al Rai Arabic Daily Monday that the ministry set prices that guarantee a reasonable profit for coffee merchants depending on the price of the most recent shipments of imported beans. But the NSCP, said Dr. Fanek, follows the theory that trade is a matter of profit and loss, therefore contends that the merchant should follow current international market prices.

Dr. Fanek stated, in such case, if the prices of the international market rise, it means the merchant would achieve an "exceptional profit" and conversely, if

prices decline, the merchant have to accept an "exceptional loss" on reserved stocks.

Dr. Obeidat dismissed this analysis without elaborating.

Coffee retailer Ghazi Khairi, complaining that his shop expenses for rent, electricity and equipment are sizable, said the ministry's prices are more reasonable than the society's, adding that the ministry itself was also keen on protecting the consumer.

Mr. Khairi, who said that coffee is not a priority commodity, urged the NSCP to concentrate on other basic commodities when it launches such boycott campaigns in the future.

Jordan, Saudi Arabia discuss trade ties

AMMAN (Petra)— Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb Tuesday held talks with Saudi Minister of Trade Osama Faqih over trade relations between the two countries.

The Saudi Minister, who is in Jordan to take part in the preparatory meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), said that the Jordan and Saudi Arabia have a "vast opportunity for promoting their cooperation in various fields."

The Saudi minister said that the volume of trade between the two countries is currently estimated at 550 million Saudi riyals, adding that further efforts could be made to boost the trade relations.



Ali Abul Ragheb

He added that his country is in favour of increasing the volume of trade with Jordan and bolster cooperation in various other fields.

Smuggled monkey on her way back home

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A six-year-old gibbon, an endangered species, that was smuggled to Jordan five-years ago from Bangkok Tuesday was on her way to the London Zoo for rehabilitation before being returned to Bangkok, according to Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) officials.

"We were contacted by a Jordanian family nine months ago who informed us that they owned a monkey and they wanted to get rid of it because it was bothering them and they did not know what to do with it," said Salma Atie, section head of the Fund Raising and Public Relations Department at the RSCN said.

Ms. Atie told the Jordan Times that the family did not realise that they owned a "wild animal," and after five years, the gibbon started hurting children and bothering their neighbours.

The gibbon, a small ape, is found in the forests of Southeast Asia. Gibbons are highly adapted to arboreal life. Their arms are

extremely long, and they swing through trees with great speed and agility. Gibbons live in permanent families consisting of a male, a female, and their young; they are known to be very territorial.

According to the International Zoo Yearbook, during 1985 there were 129 gibbons in 38 collections (families of gibbons) in different areas of the world.

Adnan Budeiri, head of the Research and Survey Section at the RSCN, said that intensive contacts were made between international organisations for the conservation of wild animals after the department at the RSCN learnt about the endangered species.

"Contacts were made for nine months with different international institutions like the London Zoo (the recipient zoo) the World Primate Association in Thailand and the Natural Conservation Society in Thailand," Mr. Budeiri said.

"We were finally advised by the London Zoo to first send the animal there for rehabilitation, then the zoo would deliver it (the gibbon) to Thailand."

Mr. Budeiri explained that because the family, who had kept the gibbon in Amman, brought it up as a pet and fed her inappropriate food, "not realising that it was wild and it needed special attention and atmosphere," the rehabilitation at the zoo facility was required.

"The whole lifestyle of this animal has changed because it was not living in its natural environment... it belongs to nature, should not be kept in captivity and should not change its natural environment," he added.

According to Ms. Atie, the RSCN was complying with the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which prevents the exploitation of species through international trade. Jordan has been a signatory to the CITES since 1979.

According to RSCN statement, Her Majesty Queen Noor and Royal Jordanian Airlines have lent support for the transportation and follow-up operation involved in rehabilitating the gibbon.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister, Al Ahram review cultural dialogue

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh Tuesday discussed with the deputy chief editor of the Egyptian daily Al Ahram, Mahmoud Murad, and the director general of Al Ahram Advertising Agency, Hassan Hamdi, cultural relations between Jordan and Egypt. The two sides also discussed the role of press foundations in supporting and enhancing the cultural movement and encouraging cultural exchange. They stressed the need for initiating objective and responsible cultural dialogue as a means to revive inter-Arab cultural exchange.

Building licencing deadline set for end of 1996

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Higher Organisation Council called on owners of unlicensed buildings which were built prior to May 2, 1985 to obtain the necessary licences before the end of December 1996. The council, meeting under the chairmanship of the Minister Nader Dhuheirat, warned that defaulters will have to pay a 10 per cent fine for each year beyond the 1996 deadline, in addition to the fees due on their buildings. Mr Dhuheirat called on citizens to take this opportunity to settle their dues to the ministry, promising them every possible facility.

2nd phase of educational reform plan to start

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education will this year start implementing the second phase of the educational development plan which focuses on constructing school buildings at the overall estimated cost of \$176.2 million.

The announcement was made by the director of the ministry's School Buildings Department, Yahya Al Kasbi, at a press conference Tuesday.

The plan, he said, will be implemented in three successive programmes, the

first of which will focus on setting up facilities for promoting vocational training to meet the local labour market's needs. The second programme entails providing the different equipment and experts and technicians and the third concerns restoration and refurbishing of existing school buildings. He said that the ministry last year spent JD 6.2 million on maintenance of schools and the creation of playgrounds and JD 37.5 million on the construction of school buildings.

The Jordan Times What's Going On

(the daily cultural activities column) will appear on Thursday as cultural activities resume following the end of year holidays.

The Embassy of France announces that it will receive condolences over the death of the former President of the Republic **Mr. François Mitterrand** on Wednesday the 10th and Thursday the 11th of January 1996, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ambassador's Residence in Jabal Amman

French press mourns passing of great statesman

PARIS (AFP) — The French press Tuesday mourned the passing of a great statesman with the death of former President Francois Mitterrand and issued lengthy special supplements devoted to his life and political career.

The verdict on 79-year-old Mitterrand's life was unanimous on all sides of the political spectrum — along with Charles de Gaulle, Mitterrand was the country's most important politician since World War II.

Parisian and provincial newspapers compiled special supplements to commemorate Mitterrand's death and put out extra copies, often doubling their normal output, in anticipation of brisk sales for Tuesday.

The right-wing daily Le

Figaro devoted 26 pages to Mitterrand, while the centre-left afternoon daily Le Monde issued a special eight-page supplement Monday.

Le Parisien summed up the general sentiment in its editorial Tuesday: "The age and exceptional political longevity of the former president largely accounts for the impression that with Francois Mitterrand goes the last of the great French politicians to have lived through the tragedies of the century and to have played a role in them."

Le Figaro wrote: "He was France for 14 years. The hour has not come for polemic, if only to respect the grief of half of the French population who voted him in. The time has come to salute his rhetorical skills, his tenacity in the

face of trials, his courage in the face of illness. Let us turn our minds to what he brought to the nation."

For left-wing Liberation, "Francois Mitterrand's life was very close to what he had dreamed of, he played and interpreted his own roles. It is a rare privilege. He imposed his name, his story, his marble-like figure in the wake of de Gaulle. He will have won his life's bet: his name will figure alongside that of de Gaulle, the big other, some would add to that of Clemenceau."

The Communist daily l'Humanite wrote: "In 1971, Francois Mitterrand made a famous speech in these terms: 'Money which corrupts, money which buys, money which crushes, money which kills, money which ruins and money which rots the con-

science of men.' His diagnosis was penetrating and scathing. It was nearly a quarter of a century ago. Alas! the evil is still there."

The financial daily Les Echos said: "An absolute monarch, he slipped into clothes which many feared were too big for him, and gave his role a steadfast character... In short, he ran France as he ran his career. What worked for him, the statesman, worked in many respects for the country."

Le Monde, for its part, commented: "He was this permanent oscillation... He functioned with two cerebral hemispheres, the first one capable of contradicting or hindering the second. On the one hand, the principle of movement, on the other, that of reality."

Greek socialists under pressure to pick new leader

ATHENS (R) — The conservative opposition launched a censure motion in the Greek parliament Monday, accusing them of lacking the courage to replace ailing Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu.

"For almost two months our country is a rudderless ship," New Democracy member Costas Karamanlis said. "The government is responsible for this because it lacks courage."

The censure motion is unlikely to threaten the Socialists, who have a comfortable majority in the 300-seat parliament.

It launched a three-day debate before a vote on whether Mr. Papandreu, in critical condition in hospital, is fit to rule.

New Democracy urged the government to seek a new leader and accused Mr. Papandreu of plunging the country into political uncertainty by delaying the choice of a successor.

"Andreas Papandreu did not foresee a succession process despite the fact he knew of the condition of his health," conservative member Dora Bakoyanni told parliament. "The tolerance of the Greek people has long expired."

Mr. Papandreu, 76, was admitted to hospital eight weeks ago suffering from pneumonia.

He is on life-support machines to help his failing lungs and kidneys and has fought off several secondary infections that almost killed him. Doctors said Monday he was slightly improving.

Most hospital and political sources say he is incapacitated and unable to follow the political debate raging around him over whether he should stand down.

Senior Socialists have hesitated to force their veteran leader to quit while he is ill but calls for his replacement have intensified across the political

spectrum.

Bowing to pressure from political leaders alarmed at the power vacuum and aware of the need to maintain the unity of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement founded by Mr. Papandreu in 1974, the Socialists have vowed to pick a new prime minister this month.

"By the end of the month we will have a new prime minister, unless Mr. Papandreu resigns sooner," Dimitris Beis, leader of the Socialist parliamentary group, was quoted as saying.

The Greek constitution offers no help, stating that a prime minister can be replaced only when he resigns or dies. Several Socialists insist Mr. Papandreu's consent is needed before he can be replaced.

No one has wanted to raise the issue with Mr. Papandreu, who has led his party with an iron grip for 21 years and tolerated no

ambitious rivals.

His son, Education Minister George Papandreu, said he would explain "political truths" to his father this week, raising the possibility of his resignation.

"I will say what I have to say to my father with respect and not in the form of an ultimatum," he told reporters.

One fear has been that Mr. Papandreu might refuse to quit, raising questions about the legality of an attempt to replace him.

Asked what would happen if Mr. Papandreu refused to stand down, Mr. Beis said: "That would complicate matters but we would proceed (with replacing him)."

The Socialist parliamentary group would choose Mr. Papandreu's successor in a two-round vote. Favourites are Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis and former Industry Minister Costas Simitis.

Shadow of the gunman returns to Belfast in vigilante killings

BELFAST (R) — Mickey Mooney's executioners struck with chilling ruthlessness as he sipped a drink in a Belfast bar.

Known to his associates as "moneybags", Mooney was the first victim of a nine-month spiral of killings in Northern Ireland's drugs underworld.

From the shadows of uneasy guerrilla truces, seasoned gunmen have emerged to deal death to small-time drug dealers and send dozens of terrified targets underground.

"The last thing we need is self-appointed vigilantes," said police drug squad detective Inspector Larry Cheshire.

"Despite what the crimes may be or alleged to be, it certainly isn't the way any civilised society would want to deal with its offenders," he told Reuters.

Security forces blame the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) for a self-styled anti-drugs purge that has claimed seven Roman Catholic victims, five of them in the past five weeks.

It's a bid for community control masquerading as a law-and-order crusade in depressed Catholic estates where the guerrillas have a traditional powerbase, say British security sources and moderate Catholic nationalists.

Republicans assert that the gunmen's "rough justice" is a response to a policing vacuum in strongholds where many Catholics mistrust the largely protestant police force and fear "a flood of drugs" ruining young lives.

Guerrilla war between IRA gunmen opposed to British rule and "loyalists" determined to defend it

ended with matching truces in September 1994. The new deaths have jolted the uneasy calm.

Now a sinister new twist is fuelling concern after stop-go political momentum failed to capitalise on the truces.

Protestant extremists are getting in on the drug purge, according to an influential pressure group.

Security sources say they are treating seriously republican and loyalist "death-list" threats to 24 named individuals.

The existence of the lists were disclosed by the influential pressure group, Families Against Intimidation And Terror (FAIT).

"It's a disgrace at a time of peace," FAIT founder Nancy Gracey said about the blood-letting.

Catholic grandmother Gracey is a thorn in the side

of masked gangs who mete out brutal beatings to individuals deemed by kangaroo courts to be thieves, burglars or muggers.

Her group monitors a rising tide of "punishment attacks", highlighting a vicious hidden side of the peace process.

The formidable campaigner said she had seen a death-list of 10 Protestants and Catholics, drawn up by the Protestant action force, a cover name for the banned Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

It threatens to "carbon copy" the violence of a group called "Direct action against drugs" which Ms. Gracey says has 14 names on a death list. Both made a mockery of democracy, she declared.



Hundreds of journalists and wellwishers gather in front of the Paris apartment where the body of Francois Mitterrand lays in state (AFP photo)

Bombs target 26 buildings in Corsica

AJACCIO, France (AFP)

— A Corsican nationalist group carried out 26 bombings and 11 attempted bombings overnight Monday, mainly aimed at public buildings symbolising the French state.

The bombings, which caused light to moderate damage but no casualties, were the latest in a series by rival groups vying for the attention of the French government ahead of political contacts with Prime Minister Alain Juppe and Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debre.

The Resistenza organisation claimed responsibility for the overnight attacks on the French-ruled Mediterranean island.

Resistenza is the armed wing of one of two splinters of the banned Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC), which broke into two in 1989.

The explosions came as Mr. Juppe prepared to hold talks in Paris with elected representatives of Corsica where violence linked to rivalries within the nationalist movement resulted in 36 murders and at least one bomb blast a day last year.

Mr. Debre has also said he plans to visit Corsica but no date has yet been set for the trip.

In a communique Resistenza accused Paris of supporting "a discredited political class and institutions" and called on it "to accept a genuine political solution in Corsica."

The communique warned the government not to favour some nationalist groups in preference to others. It called for a nationalist "consensus" and warned that failing that, there would be "civil war between Corsicans."

Late Monday night, five powerful blasts shook the centre of Ajaccio. The targets were tax offices and two banks.

Another explosion later damaged the Air Inter Airlines office while experts said they had defused several other bombs planted at a tax office and a branch of the France Telecom Telecommunications Authority.

Leaflets carrying the warning "danger mines" traditionally used by Corsican bombers were found at the scene of the

explosions.

In southern Corsica, more banks and public buildings were targeted in Porticcio, Porto-Vecchio, Bonifacio, Propriano and Sartene.

In the north of the island, a series of explosions took place in Bastia where security had been stepped up after four blasts on the island the previous night.

Seven explosions occurred in Bastia Monday night, also aimed at tax offices, banks and France Telecom.

Other bombs went off in Saint-Florent and Ghisonaccia.

A previously unknown organisation, U Fronte Ribellu, claimed Sunday night's attacks, which targeted the state ferry company SNCM in Bastia and Ile-Rousse in the north of the island and Porto Vecchio in the south. Tourist offices were also badly damaged at Corte, in the centre.

The military wing of the second, more radical branch of the FLNC, has also waged its own bombing campaign, badly damaging public buildings in a series of 20 attacks in recent weeks.

Film Director John Woo to be honoured

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Hong Kong film Director John Woo will receive an award for lifetime achievement at a regional movie industry convention here next month, the organisers have said. The award presentation will take place on the final night of the Jan. 30-Feb. 1 Cineasia '96 convention, said Jimmy Sunshine, managing director of the event, a major industry convention for the Asia-Pacific marketplace. Woo made his U.S. film debut in 1994 with "Hard Target." He most recently directed the action thriller "Broken Arrow," starring John Travolta and Christian Slater, due to be screened at Cineasia. The director with 26 films to his credit struck fame with his stylised gangster movies in the mid-1980s. His films include "Hard-Boiled," "The Killer," and "Bullet In The Head."

Diana pictured weeping after therapist visit

LONDON (R) — Britain's Princess Diana was pictured weeping Tuesday after being photographed following another visit to her London psychotherapist. The Daily Mirror captured her sobbing on the short walk to her car from the home of eating disorder therapist Susie Orbach. "She was leaning against her car...and weeping uncontrollably," said one of the photographers. "We could all hear her sobbing." The photographers said she composed herself after about a minute and drove away, her eyes shielded by sunglasses despite the hour being after dark. Princess Diana, who has admitted suffering in the past from bulimia, has visited Dr. Orbach several times since Queen Elizabeth asked her last month to agree to divorce husband Prince Charles. She met her lawyers last week but has made clear she will not be rushed into any decision, although Charles has already agreed to the idea. Some media reports say she realises a divorce from Prince Charles is now inevitable following their acrimonious separation in 1992 but is holding out for agreement on a formal role for herself as a roving ambassador or "queen of hearts". Both Buckingham Palace and the government have discussed her request. Princess Diana refers to Dr. Orbach, author of the best-selling "Fat Is a Feminist Issue", as her "saviour". She visited her on Boxing Day after spending Christmas Day alone, and again last week after returning from a solo holiday in the Caribbean.

Pakistan's Clint Eastwood shot dead

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — Pakistan's Clint Eastwood, top movie star Sultan Rabi, was shot dead by two unidentified assailants early Tuesday, police said. Sultan Rabi, 54, was near the town of Gujranwala in Punjab province, about 200 kilometres from Islamabad, when assailants sprayed him and a friend with bullets as they stopped to change the wheel of their car. The friend was injured, police said, adding that the motive of the attackers, who fled, was not known.

3 killed in firecracker blast

HONG KONG (AFP) — A six-year-old child labourer was among three people killed in an explosion at an illegal firecracker factory in the southern province of Guangdong, it was reported Tuesday. At least 18 people were injured in the blast, which flattened three single-storey buildings in Maoming city Sunday, said the China-funded Ta Kung Pao daily.



Former Premier Cavaco Silva (left) is hugged by a fisherman during his campaign visit to the fishing village of Peniche (AFP photo)

Communist pulls out of Portugal's presidential election

LISBON (AFP) — Jeronimo de Sousa, the Communist Party candidate in Sunday's presidential election in Portugal, announced Monday he was pulling out of the race.

Instead, Mr. de Sousa said he was throwing his support behind Socialist hopeful Jorge Sampaio, the former mayor of Lisbon.

His withdrawal cuts to three the number of aspiring successors to outgoing President Mario Soares — Mr. Sampaio, former liberal Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva and

Alberto Martins, who leads a small far-left party.

Mr. Martins is widely expected to also stand down in favour of Mr. Sampaio. Opinion polls suggest the ex-mayor of Lisbon would then beat Cavaco Silva in a head-on clash.

Mr. de Sousa made his announcement flanked by fellow executive members of what many regard as Europe's most orthodox Communist Party.

He said he hoped his move would boost the chances of Cavaco Silva's defeat and that Mr.

Sampaio was a proven democrat who would be totally independent while respecting the constitution.

Mr. Sampaio, former general secretary of the Socialist Party, was twice elected mayor of Portugal's capital with Communist backing.

Mr. de Sousa's withdrawal, which is to be made official Tuesday by Portugal's constitutional court, came too late to change ballots, which have already been printed with his name and picture.

Ballots marked in his favour Sunday will be declared null and void.

Nigerian government confirms detention of correspondent

LAGOS (AFP) — The Nigerian government Tuesday confirmed the detention of the correspondent of the British Financial Times daily in Nigeria, Paul Adams.

A government spokesman for the southern Rivers state, where Mr. Adams was arrested Thursday, told AFP by telephone that "up till Monday evening, he was still undergoing interrogation."

Spokesman Fidelis Agbiki said Nigerian officials were discussing Mr. Adams' detention with diplomats.

While not giving a specific reason for the journalist's arrest, he said the case was that of "being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Mr. Adams was arrested at a rally called to mark "Ogoni day" by the opposition Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in Bori, one of the major towns in

Ogoniland. He was taken to Port Harcourt, the state capital, where an official of the British High Commission in Lagos was allowed to see him for 30 minutes Sunday.

The Financial Times said Tuesday that Mr. Adams, who has been in Nigeria since 1993, was "on a reporting visit to the (Ogoni) region, where there have been protests against pollution by the oil industry, as well as demands that a greater share of oil revenue go to the local Ogoni people."

The rally at which he was arrested was broken up by police using teargas. It was the first public rally organised by the MOSOP since Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight colleagues were hanged on Nov. 10 after their conviction of murder.

Russian intelligence chief named foreign minister: report

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin appointed Yevgeny Primakov, currently head of the foreign intelligence service, as foreign minister Tuesday, Russian television reported, citing a presidential spokesman.

The Kremlin would not confirm the report.

Primakov, 66, has experience of tough negotiations, notably in the Middle East, where he was ex-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's special envoy.

Andrei Kozyrev resigned as foreign minister Friday.

Mr. Kozyrev's departure had been expected for some time due to mounting pressure from Communist and hardline nationalist forces over his generally pro-Western policies.

However, presidential spokesman Sergei Medvedev said that "Western countries should not take the resignation of Andrei Kozyrev as foreign minister as a threat and a sign of a change in Russia's foreign policy."

Chun, Roh stashed away more than \$1.3 b

SEOUL (AFP) — Former South Korean Presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo accumulated more than \$1.3 billion while in power, prosecutors said Tuesday, as they provided details of Mr. Chun's slush fund.

"It has been confirmed that Chun stashed away more money than former President Roh Tae-woo," prosecutor Choi Hwan told reporters.

Mr. Roh has admitted to accumulating \$650 million during his tenure from 1988 to 1993, of which about \$580 million has so far been traced by investigators.

The prosecutor gave no further details on how much of his slush fund Mr. Chun was still holding, saying only that Mr. Chun's remaining funds appeared to be smaller than Mr. Roh's, which are estimated at around \$290 million.

"Chun withdrew and spent more than his successor during and after his presidency" from 1980 to 1988, he said.

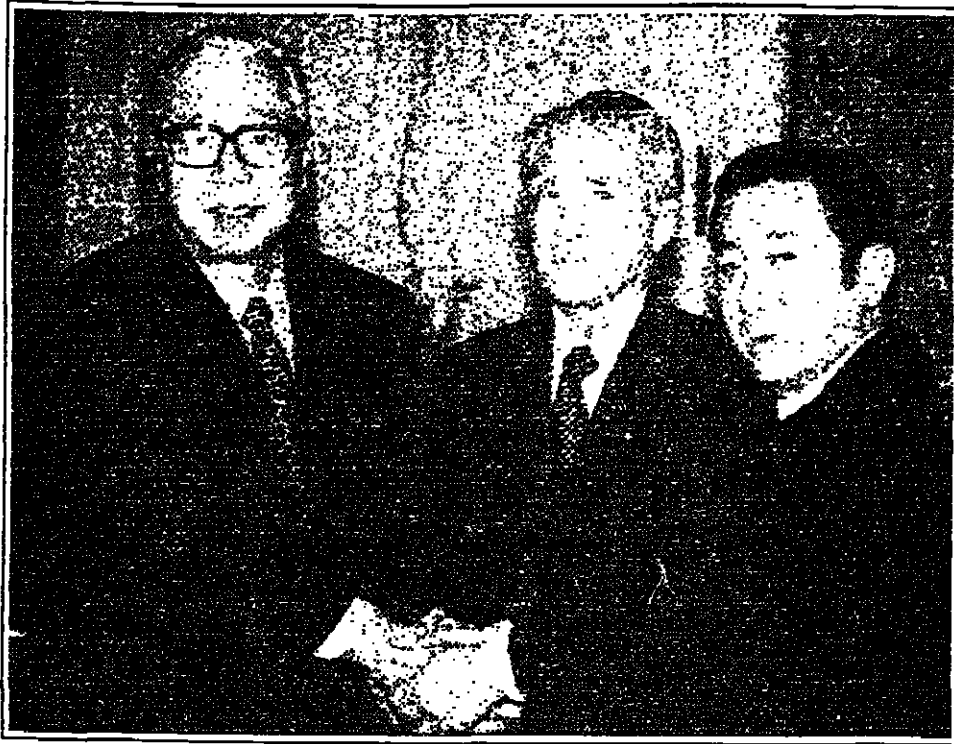
"In terms of the size and mobilisation techniques of their slush funds, Chun appears to have been more adept than Roh," he added.

Mr. Chun, who will turn 65 this month, was arrested on Dec. 3 on mutiny charges related to a 1979 military coup following Mr. Roh's imprisonment in November on graft charges.

Graft charges against Mr. Chun have yet to be filed, but prosecutors have questioned Mr. Chun's relatives and in-laws suspected of having helped the ex-president launder his slush money.

Mr. Chun's elder brother, Chun Ki-hwan, was questioned Monday after investigators uncovered \$32 million worth of public bonds bought by Mr. Chun between March 1988 and January 1989.

Prosecutors believe Mr. Chun had already cashed in all the bonds at securities firms and banks before being sent to Anyang prison last month.



Trade Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto (right), outgoing Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama (centre) and Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura, party leaders, at the national Diet (AFP photo)

Japan's opposition denounces coalition's power monopoly

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's main opposition New Frontier Party renewed calls for immediate general elections Tuesday, criticising the ruling coalition for its monopoly of political power.

"Delaying elections is an insult to the people," New Frontier Party President Ichiro Ozawa told a party meeting, adding that the coalition should dissolve the lower house this month to prepare for snap polls in February.

His comments came a day after the ruling coalition chose Trade and Industry Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto to succeed Tomiichi Murayama as prime minister.

Mr. Hashimoto is expected to be installed at an extraordinary Diet session Thursday and will be Japan's third prime minister elected without general elections since reformist Premier Morihiro Hosokawa took office after

the 1993 vote.

The New Frontier Party has also threatened to have its members resign en masse unless the lower house is dissolved swiftly, but the move may be cancelled as the party is divided over this issue, party officials said.

"I heard there is a talk about the move," said the aide to Takashi Yonezawa, secretary general of New Frontier Party. "But whether we actually go ahead and do so is still undecided."

In a bid to seek an early dissolution of the lower house, Mr. Ozawa Monday suggested he and Mr. Hashimoto meet before the extraordinary session.

However, Mr. Hashimoto turned down the idea and instead suggested the extraordinary session be preceded by a meeting between each party's parliament affairs committee chairmen, officials said.

The house of representa-

tives' term ends in July 1997, but Tuesday, chief cabinet secretary Koken Nosaka hinted that a general election might be held around September.

The New Frontier Party has 170 seats among the 511 of the house of representatives against the nearly 300 held by the three ruling parties — Mr. Hashimoto's Liberal Democratic Party, Mr. Murayama's Social Democratic Party and new party Sakigake.

Meanwhile, the ruling coalition continued its discussion over the lineup of a new cabinet led by Mr. Hashimoto. "I have not sorted out my ideas on a new cabinet yet," Mr. Hashimoto told reporters.

Mr. Hashimoto is expected to name his new cabinet ministers Thursday when Mr. Murayama's cabinet formally steps down. Wataru Kubo, secretary general of the SDP, is expected to join the cabinet as deputy prime minister.

British foreign secretary arrives in Beijing

BEIJING (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind arrived here Tuesday, voicing optimism for his upcoming talks with Chinese leaders on the handover of Hong Kong in 1997.

Stressing that China and Britain shared a common interest in Hong Kong's future, Mr. Rifkind said it followed that "we can have very viable talks on how confidence in Hong Kong can best be retained."

However, he added that a number of issues remained unresolved, especially Beijing's commitment to dissolving Hong Kong's Legislative Council (Legco) after the takeover, which

Mr. Rifkind indicated would have damaging consequences.

"We very much hope that the Chinese government will wish to see the continuation of institutions which enjoy the support of the people of Hong Kong," the foreign secretary said.

China should appreciate "that alterations or changes will bring into question the realisation of that objective," he added.

China vowed to dissolve Legco in retaliation for Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's decision to push ahead with political reforms that led in September to the first direct elections to the legislature in 150 years of

British colonial rule.

Mr. Rifkind, on the first visit to China by a British foreign secretary since 1993, arrived from Hong Kong where he had stated that there was "no good reason" why China should abolish Legco.

He was due to meet later Tuesday with his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen for talks which are sure to be dominated by the Hong Kong issue. He is also scheduled to meet Premier Li Peng Wednesday and President Jiang Zemin the day after.

Mr. Rifkind said he was looking forward to his meeting with Mr. Qian, when he hoped to build on

the "excellent" talks the two men held in London in October.

He also dismissed as "very hypothetical" the possibility of London taking Beijing to an international court over the Legco issue. "We are working on the basis that there will be a successful transition" based on bilateral agreements signed by both countries, Mr. Rifkind said, adding: "I have no reason to believe that will not be the case."

The foreign secretary has said he will raise human rights issues during his visit, including reports about abuse and neglect in China's state-run orphanages.

Two ruling party men shot dead in Karachi, official killed in Punjab

KARACHI (AFP) — Ethnic and sectarian violence continued in Pakistan Tuesday with the murder of two ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) officials and the slaying of the head of the excise department in the Punjab.

Unidentified gunmen abducted three PPP officials from their homes in Karachi before taking them to a nearby park where they were shot, officials said.

Two of the three, all junior-level city leaders of the PPP headed by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto,

died but one, Mohammed Sultan, survived with a wound to the jaw.

The motive behind the attack, which took place in the city's troubled central district, was not yet known.

Tuesday's killings take the death toll for the month to 54.

Last year, nearly 1,800 people died in Karachi's political violence. The government holds the ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) responsible for the unrest.

The MQM denies the charge and says the vio-

lence stems from the government's "racist and anti-Mohajir" policies. The MQM represents Urdu-speaking migrants from India who came here after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

Several government buildings have been targets of violence and more than 200 security personnel killed last year. Members of the PPP have also been killed. The MQM denies its involvement in the attacks.

Dozens of MQM activists have also been killed in Karachi's endemic vio-

lence. In the other slaying Sajjad Gilani, head of the excise department in Punjab province, was on his way to work in his official car when two unidentified men riding a motorbike opened fire on the vehicle.

Police sources said they suspect a sectarian motive behind the killing of Gilani, who was a Shiite Muslim. Sectarian killings blamed on religious militants are commonplace in Pakistan, which has a Sunni Muslim majority.

Crash death toll at 260 as aviation corruption allegations mount

KINSHASA (agencies) — The death toll from Zaire's worst air disaster rose to 260 Tuesday amid mounting allegations that complacency and corruption are rife in the African country's civil aviation industry.

Medical and aid workers revised upwards the number of dead, from Monday's accident, in which a cargo plane ploughed into a crowded market in the Zairean capital, but the number of injured remained unknown. Previous estimates put the death toll at 250.

But as International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) teams prepared tours of hospitals and clinics to draw up a final toll, a picture of overloaded planes, illegal flights and ancient aircraft, all of which are dangerously undermining Zaire's aviation industry, emerged from corroborating sources.

The Russian-built Antonov AN-32 failed to gain altitude as it was trying to take off from Ndolo Airport, a small airport near the centre of Kinshasa used for domestic flights.

Instead it cut a devastating path into the vast open-air Simbazikita Market, situated at the end of the runway, engulfing it in flames. Most of the dead were not on the plane but at the market.

Authoritative but unofficial sources said the plane was making a secretive flight to Angola, deemed "sensitive" because of that southwest African country's ban on planes from Zaire entering its airspace.

Luanda has for years suspected Kinshasa of running weapons into Angola to support the former rebel army of the Union for the

Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) led by Jonas Savimbi.

Such aircraft are usually in a poor state and are often manned by suspect crews.

"Here you can buy anything — you can get a pilot's licence just as easily as a driving licence," one qualified pilot said.

Other pilots working for licensed airlines in Zaire have said some crew are paid "bonuses" to take off while overloaded, or for making "sensitive" flights to Angola.

According to informed but unconfirmed sources, the four-strong Russian crew manning the crashed plane escaped the carnage unhurt but then fled to avoid the retribution from a crowd that gathered at the market. Other sources said they were arrested.

The Zairean press jumped Tuesday to criticise the corruption endemic in the country's civil aviation industry, and other public sectors, with one opposition newspaper denouncing the "airborne mafiosi who rely on malleable and corruptible leaders."

"Our country has never paid much attention to regulations, whatever they are and whatever field they may apply to," another daily said.

After the crash, the governor of Kinshasa, Mungul Diaka, called on authorities to accept responsibility for the accident and implement guidelines to regulate air transport and travel.

Aid agencies meanwhile are pitching in to help the injured, with the ICRC and Belgian arm of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) sending medical supplies to the Mama-Yemo Hospital,

where the injured were taken Monday.

Zaire radio denounced scenes of looting which broke out at the market in the wake of the crash.

"People rushed to the scene not to help the injured, but to loot their bodies and the goods at the market," a commentator said.

The Zairean government, for its part, ordered an inquiry into the accident and declared three days of mourning. It also closed Ndolo Airport and banned cargo flights until further notice.

But analysts said the measures would not be enough to root out endemic corruption.

"Once more, it is clear that (strict regulations) must be implemented," one businessman working legally in the aviation industry said. "If not the mismanagement will continue and easy money will continue to be made."

"You can make huge amounts of money very quickly here," he said. "But it is becoming dirtier and dirtier."

Meanwhile a judicial inquiry swung into action Tuesday to establish the cause of the disaster.

Four Russian crew members miraculously escaped the crash itself and the vengeance of an angry mob that trailed them to a city clinic. Two other crew members — a Ukrainian and a Zairean remained missing, Zaire's state prosecutor said.

"A judicial inquiry has been started to establish who is responsible," prosecutor Mukenge Bisumbule told Reuters, adding that a preliminary report was

expected later Tuesday.

The government ordered all cargo planes registered in Zaire grounded until they pass compulsory technical tests. Cargo flights to Angola had also been banned. Information Minister Philippe Masegabio Nzanu announced on television.

Monday's midday crash of the plane belonging to a private Zairean firm, African Air, recalled the death of 141 people when another Zairean plane came down in Angola in December.

"The aircraft tried to take off but it only got a few metres off the ground, then it disappeared and there was an explosion," said Githie Mukoka, who was at the airport when the plane took off. A Zairean air force colonel who was also there said the aircraft appeared to be overloaded and unable to gain altitude.

"The crew have been kept for their own safety. Crowds gathered outside the clinic where they were being treated. The crowds tried to break in to avenge the deaths," Mr. Mukenge said.

The doctor who treated three of the four Russians said they suffered only minor injuries. A Reuters correspondent saw the Russians at the police station looking tired but well.

The road network in Zaire has broken down along with the economy, which is in a shambles following years of neglect, corruption and mismanagement.

Private airline companies have mushroomed as the most viable means of transportation in the vast central African country.

Arzu confirmed winner in Guatemala's presidential race

GUATEMALA CITY (AFP) — Rightist businessman Alvaro Arzu Monday was officially declared the victor in the presidential run-off that pitted him against another conservative Sunday.

The 49-year-old leader of the National Vanguard Party (PAN) defeated his rival Alfonso Portillo of the right-wing Guatemalan

Republican Front (FRG) by a tally of 51 per cent to 49 per cent, according to the supreme election tribunal.

Mr. Portillo conceded defeat, saying "our role will be that of a constructive opposition" but said the vote showed how far the FRG had come in a short time "and with the system against it."

In his first remarks since

his victory was confirmed, Mr. Arzu said that he hoped to reach a peace agreement with the rebel Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity within seven months to end a three-decade civil war.

"It is a real challenge but also an opportunity for all Guatemalans," he said, adding that he did not anticipate any pressure from the

46,000-strong military.

"The army will have the space that the constitution gives it and not an inch more," he said.

Analysts have said the vote essentially amounted to a referendum on Mr. Portillo's political mentor, ex-military ruler General Efraim Rios Montt. Voter turnout was low as predicted.

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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

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Investing in peace

THE MILITARY assistance package which the United States offered to the Kingdom this week will definitely contribute to the modernisation of the Jordanian Armed Forces. But it certainly falls short of meeting the full defence requirements of the Kingdom and must be followed by other packages in order to render the Armed Forces more capable of shouldering their responsibilities in the peace era. An investment in the Jordanian Armed Forces is an investment in the stability of the region. As Jordan has traditionally been a force for moderation in the Middle East, its armed forces have always been a force for security and stability in the area.

As His Majesty King Hussein said during his joint press conference with U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry, the Jordanian Armed Forces are a shield for democracy, freedom and human rights in Jordan and in the area. Not only has the Jordanian army played a leading role in training other professional armies in the Middle East, its duties have expanded to include peacekeeping missions in various parts of the world. And the performance of the Jordanian troops in all these fields of operations have received the praise of all those who worked with them.

But in order for the army to maintain its level of professionalism and battle field readiness, it needs to be equipped by the best of what new defence technology can offer. Obviously, Jordan, with its limited resources, cannot foot the bill of providing its army with the modern weaponry that it needs. It is therefore the duty of others who share Jordan its ideals of democracy, pluralism and regional security to help share the cost.

The Middle East is entering into a new era of peace. But this peace will need to be protected by those who are most committed to it, most capable of doing the job. The Jordanian army can only play a leading role in protecting peace against any attempts to foil it. And it is the duty of those who have worked so hard for the cause of peace in the Middle East to invest in protecting it. The United States in particular should realise that investing in Jordan and its army can only help protect the U.S. interests as well as those of all forces of peace and stability in the region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Dustour commented on the Israeli Syrian talks in Washington by saying that the Syrians who have made their point clear since the very start, were not expected to change their demand for a complete withdrawal for a complete peace. Mohammad Kawash said the Israeli government which is keen on clinching a peace treaty with Damascus before the Israeli parliamentary elections, have no alternative but to accept the Syrian legitimate and logical demand and take speedy steps towards a settlement. It should be emphasised that the Syrians have remained committed to their earlier pledge made at the Madrid conference of achieving a full peace provided that Israel withdraw all its forces from all the occupied Syrian heights. The fact that the Syrians are in Washington is sufficient evidence that they will honour this commitment. If the Washington talks are being impeded and encounter difficulties, the only explanation is that the Israeli side is procrastinating and delaying the signing of an agreement. If the Peres government is keen on winning the coming elections, they ought to be brave enough and seize the peace opportunity with the Syrians in order to secure the aspired peace which in turn will win them the coming elections, the writer said.

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily called on the government to reconsider an earlier decision of giving license to individual farmers and other people to utilise artesian wells. Sultan Al Hattab said in view of the scarcity of the water resources in Jordan, the state should have the sole authority of utilising these wells to satisfy domestic, agricultural and industrial needs. No person should be given certain privileges at the expense of the nation no matter how influential he is, because national interests rise above all individual interests and other considerations. He called on the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to refrain from giving any more licenses to individuals to drill any artesian wells which in view of past experiences, have been used to irrigate private farms that require a great deal of water.

U.S. government comes back, campaign year begins

By David Briscoe
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The federal government was reopening across America this week and U.S. embassies around the world prepared to issue visas for the first time in three weeks. But the political battle that caused a partial government shutdown was not over.

Presidential politics, overshadowed by the so-called budget battle, promised to dominate the next few weeks. Ten prominent candidates for the Republican nomination, led by senate majority leader Bob Dole, headed into early state caucuses and primaries that will pick or influence delegates to their August nomination convention.

The shutdown, lifted Friday night in a compromise that opens some offices but

still leaves most without funding, diverted attention away from the Republican presidential contest at a crucial point in the campaign.

Although the hardest impact of the 21-day shutdown was felt by government workers and tourists in Washington, people and private business across the country and visa applicants abroad also were feeling the pain and inconvenience.

Anger was focused on both Congress and on President Clinton, but polls showed most of the blame for the demise of government services fell on the Republican-controlled Congress.

The shutdown's impact on presidential politics was unclear, but Mr. Dole had the possible advantage of intense national exposure during a time when the give-and-take of candidate debates might otherwise have garnered attention.

Already far ahead of the pack in funding and in polls, Mr. Dole emerged from the latest rounds in the budget battle with the image of an effective compromiser and a political moderate. As a consequence, however, he ran the danger of alienating party conservatives.

The dispute has Republicans trying to get Mr. Clinton to agree to a plan that would cut taxes and balance federal spending and income within seven years, based on Congressional calculations. Mr. Clinton has his own figures and says he won't approve any plan, that would hinder future medical or social services.

Despite the intensity of the debate and the aura of crisis in Washington caused by the shutdown, actual balancing of the budget and the future of such programmes, however, would depend on the actions of future congresses and presi-

ents. The partial government shutdown was prompted by refusal of both sides to agree on current spending measures that fund the federal government.

Late Friday, Congress approved temporary measures to put government workers back on the job, pay them fully for their nonworking days and fund some but not all government offices.

Although the general election is 10 months away, the first Republican political caucus, in Louisiana, is Feb. 6, followed rapidly by a caucus in Iowa and primaries in five states before the end of the month. Some states hold party meetings or caucuses to select delegates to the convention and others do it with primary elections or other means.

If any candidate is to overtake front-runner Mr. Dole, it would require strong showings in the early

political events, which shape headlines around the country and can spark or halt a campaign.

Mr. Dole, allied with the White House in trying to reopen the government, at first angered many House Republicans when he pushed through a Senate measure to put federal workers back on the job.

But by week's end, they were marching with House Speaker Newt Gingrich in support of a temporary measure that had much the same immediate effect. It runs out Jan. 26, when yet another shutdown could loom.

The next challenge for Republicans, short of a compromise with Mr. Clinton, is to convince their constituents that employees back to those offices that had to funding was any better than keeping them home.

By Ali Kassay

The traffic light shuffle

JORDAN, AS we are often told, is a land of great cultural wealth and diversity. Indeed, it is amazing how so small a territory contrived to produce such a wide variety of cultural output.

Take, for instance, the folkloric dances to which we are treated whenever Jordan television miscalculates the length of programmes: One day we see Jordanians of the north having a good time, in their inimitable style, by forming a circle and jumping up and down while stamping their feet on the ground to the accompaniment of music. The following day, or perhaps later in the same evening, the bill of fare for our delectation consists of Jordanians of the centre or south, living it up in their unique tradition, by forming a circle and jumping up and down while stamping their feet on the ground to the accompaniment of music, and so on and so forth.

Despite this pride in, and diligent work to preserve our noble cultural heritage, there is a dance in which Jordanians frequently indulge, that has not received its due recognition, let alone its place of prominence in our folkloric patrimony that it richly deserves, even though this dance is just as spontaneous and entertaining, as it is widely enjoyed and expressive: The traffic light shuffle.

The dance starts when motorists line up at a red traffic light, waiting for it to turn green. All motorists approach the traffic light with one thought on their mind: Proximity to the front line, regardless of the direction which they want to take afterwards. Those that arrive first, try to occupy the maximum space, in order to block others from first rank. They do not quite go as far as to place their car horizontally across the street, but the second best thing. Those that come next, unwilling to be deprived of their rightful place in the forefront, start zigzagging from a hundred metres back, in the double objective of capturing the front most spot, and blocking the line of advance of others yet to come. Once they are at a standstill, the lines are drawn, conversation drowns to a hush, and everybody waits, in eager anticipation for the fun to start.

All motorists review the situation, and prepare their strategy. The driver in the far right lane wants to turn into the street on the left, the one in the left most lane wants to turn right, while those in the second row want the front line to disappear, and behave as though it has. On the first hint of the light turning green, everybody springs to action with remarkable energy and vitality. A lively dance ensues where cars push and jostle, approach each other and retreat, and circumnavigate one another, all to the musical accompaniment of blaring horns providing the base, policemen's whistles soaring in the soprano range, and the motorists' expletives flowing freely in between.

Such creativity should not go unrecognised. Art lovers in Jordan should draft and sign a petition to the Ministry of Culture, demanding that the traffic light shuffle should receive adequate TV time, and be included in the activities of the Jerash Festival.



Arafat's murky path to poll victory

By Derek Brown

THE PALESTINIAN elections on Jan. 20 will be won by Yasser Arafat and his Fatah movement. That much is clear. The rest is murky.

The election is unprecedented. Never before have Palestinians been asked to vote for a government. It is not a national election, in the sense that more than half the Palestinians in the world — those living in Israel and those scattered round the Middle East — will not be taking part.

But for the 2 million or so in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, democracy is coming. But it is a weird kind of democracy. With just less than two weeks to polling day, confusion abounds. Electoral district boundaries are fluid, the number of registered voters is disputed, even the size of the new legislative council keeps changing.

In the beginning, there were to be two elections: one for an 82-member council, and one for a Ra'ees, an Arabic word which conveniently means chairman or president.

Mr. Arafat, who likes to be called president, and the Israeli government, which prefers the word chairman, have since agreed to add a seat for the West Bank's 300-strong Samaritan community, and five more to redress demographic imbalances. Mr. Arafat, who will certainly be the new Ra'ees, will have a seat in the council, bringing it up to 89.

This is one example of how the election process,

explicitly laid down in the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation agreement of Sept. 28 has been tinkered with ever since. In fact, preparations for the historic poll have been under way for more than two years, subsidised by the European Union to the tune of several million pounds.

An election commission, based in the self-rule enclave of Jericho and chaired by Fatah loyalist Saeb Erakat, painstakingly drew up procedures and training schedules and a choice of voting systems. When the green light was finally given for registration of voters, the system seemed to work beautifully.

Thousands of schoolteachers, canvassing door to door, collected nearly a million names: an estimated 90 per cent of eligible adult Palestinians. But even as the administrative machine rolled, it was overtaken by the peculiarly Palestinian political process. A draft election law was published, causing instant and widespread dismay. Instead of a single constituency list system, which many argued would produce proportional representation and encourage the electorate to think in national terms, the leadership opted for 16 multi-member constituencies, the representatives to be elected on a first-past-the-post basis.

Opponents of the choice pleaded in vain that it would encourage clan-based voting in a society in which family considerations have always outweighed ideological ones. After nearly six weeks of delay, Mr. Arafat signed

the election law as it stood.

His next piece of masterly procrastination was in appointing a new election commission, to replace the preparatory body headed by Mr. Erakat, a Fatah candidate for the council.

According to the rules, the new commission was to be neutral and would have complete charge of voter registration, nomination of candidates, appeals procedures the campaign and polling.

Mr. Arafat, who had already telescoped the entire process by decreeing elections on Jan. 20, before the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, chose Mahmoud Abbas, in the inner circle of PLO chiefs, as the new commission head.

Mr. Abbas rose to the challenge without trace. Nearly two weeks after his appointment on Dec. 21, he had still not found time to meet Carl Lidbom, the increasingly exasperated head of the formidable EU observer team.

In the interval, decrees and orders were whizzing out of Mr. Arafat's Gaza headquarters, increasing the size of the council, extending the registration period, altering the nomination procedures.

The date for campaigning to begin, originally set for December 30, was abruptly put back.

Finally, the election commission announced to the media on Jan. 2 that the campaign could start right away. The candidates heard about it from the press.

In a land where elections have never happened, effectively ruled by a man

long notorious for his inability to delegate, it was always reasonably to expect a degree of muddle. But with the campaign under way, there is something more unpleasant in the electoral air.

The poll for Ra'ees is a foregone conclusion. Mr. Arafat is being opposed by Samiha Khalil, aged 72. She is a well enough respected campaigner for women and a forthright critic of the peace accords with Israel, as are most Palestinians. Nevertheless, her chances of success are negligible.

The race for the council is also being fought in favour of Fatah and the other PLO loyalist factions. The main opposition movements, Islamist and secular, are boycotting the poll. The smaller parties are barely organised.

There is a drove of independent candidates, including scores of disgruntled Fatah members who failed to get on the party ticket, or were removed from it by Mr. Arafat Peace Watch, the Israeli monitoring group, said this week it had been told by some independent candidates that they had come under "heavy pressure" to withdraw, and some had done so.

Peace Watch also reported that it had been unable to get population figures for the 16 constituencies. (The number of members per constituency was originally to be linked to the number of registered voters. That has been changed to the size of population). The group was told that the figures were unavailable, because electoral district boundaries had been changed.

"In addition to being unsound practice to change electoral district boundaries less than three weeks before election day, the danger exists that district boundaries could be manipulated in ways that could affect some of the races," Peace Watch said.

Some of the better known independents, such as Hanan Ashrawi, the former Palestinian spokeswoman, stand an excellent chance of election, as do a handful of candidates associated with the main Islamist movement, Hamas. But most are likely to be trampled in the rush of the big battalions.

In all, more than 700 candidates are standing, a healthy indicator of democratic enthusiasm, and also a nice little earner for the Palestinian Authority. Each has had to pay a deposit of \$1,000 (£666) refundable only to voters.

Palestinian television, which has piously promised to give every candidate two minutes, has yet to offer more than a daily court circular of what Mr. Arafat says and does. The media monitoring group, Reporters Sans Frontiers, found that in the 10 days to Dec. 25, Fatah was given more than 71 minutes of television coverage. Only one other small party was given speaking time 17 seconds.

In the coming days, the Palestinian territories will be awash with foreign observers — an estimated 1,500 from at least 14 countries, in addition to the 200 or so EU monitors already there. Every detail will be scrutinised. Only the result is likely to be free of any doubt.

The Guardian

LETTERS

Amman should not become a 'faceless city'

To the Editor:

A FEW days ago, I noticed in an advertisement in our newspapers announcing an opening of a new branch of a major bank in a street called "Quraish." Underneath, and in small parentheses it stated the former "Saif El Sayl" street. This took me by surprise. Why would one of the oldest street names of Amman be changed? Saif El Sayl is an area that is reminiscent of the earliest history of Amman. Its meaning "the ceiling of the stream" reflects a time when Amman had waters running through it and a point where probably the water was at its highest levels. In fact, the few written documentation about Amman during the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries describe Saif El Sayl as a place with not only water and vegetation but also of wildlife (see memoirs of Abdul Rahman Munif). Indeed, the earliest settlements of Amman at the turn of this century were of Circassian farmers around the exact area of Saif El Sayl.

I belong to a generation who is a true Ammanite. In the current era of unprecedented growth and modernisation, I see myself searching for the true character and history of the city. I really do not understand

why landmarks that are reminiscent of our unique and varied history should be wiped out by street names that are unrelated to our collective memory. Why, for example, is Mutran Street, which is named after one of the earliest boys schools established in the 1920s and that graduated present day Jordanian leaders be called Omar Ben Khattab? Why is Rainbow Street, named after one of the first cinemas and the first Western-style supermarket be changed to Abu Bakr El Siddiq? Why would Haret El Masarweh, named after a group of Egyptians who settled in Amman early this century, be changed to Khirfan Street? Why do streets named after prominent Jordanian families like Astour Street and Mango Street not remain so?

Street names inspired by our Muslim and Arab heritage are, of course, meaningful. But these can be used for the new streets and neighbourhoods that are a characteristic of the current urban sprawl of Amman today. It is not necessary to change already established and commonly used names.

There is a certain nostalgia about a street name like Saif El Sayl that is important to maintain so that Amman does not become a faceless city. I want such testimonies that

reflect my city preserved in order to keep my identity preserved.

Mary Kassar
Amman

No honour in crime

To the Editor:

LAST WEEK, you published a story about a man who received a six month prison sentence for killing his sister. The light sentence was justified because it was a "crime of honour." Therefore, I was not surprised to read on Jan. 6 about a man who stabbed his sister to death. In fact, if one can get away with such a light sentence, it wouldn't surprise me to see such stories reported.

Frankly, there is no honour in crime, and any system that can justify this needs to be reexamined. I believe the women's groups should protest such rulings and take action to amend any law which justifies crime against women as honour crimes.

Marwan M. Atallah
Amman

For Golan settlers, withdrawal is a dirty word

By Susan Sappir
Reuter

KATZRIN, Golan Heights — Many Israeli settlers in the Golan Heights say it is unthinkable that they should move out as the price of peace with Syria. "Thank God I don't believe that day will come," said Daniella Shaul, spokeswoman in the town of Katzrin where 700 families have settled in the last four years.

Damascus wants back the Heights captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. But many of the 15,000 Jewish settlers dismiss any notion of a withdrawal.

"I cannot even imagine that such a blow will arrive. You cannot talk about such a thing now. You cannot think about your own funeral," said veteran Golan resident Ramona Bar-Lev.

While U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher travels to Tel Aviv and Damascus this week to cement the progress achieved in two weeks of Israel-Syria talks near Washington, the settlers say they are staying put.

On Friday, for the first time in four years of talks, the top Syrian negotiator raised the prospect of progress being made. But settler leaders say Israel must keep the land.

They give many reasons: The strategic high ground, water and vital army training areas. Having invested the best years of their lives in building settlements, the settlers insist it is unfair to ask them to leave.

They deny the rush to buy houses is a cynical attempt to qualify for government compensation when they may be forced to leave.

"No," Mr. Shaul said. "They rush here to buy apartments because Katzrin is a very nice and cosy place to live."

Some settlers say they are

willing to leave in return for peace many others are adamant about staying.

One settler who says he will refuse an order to leave is Michael Ben-Horin, a farmer on a Golan village with a record of political activism that includes arrests.

Sitting in his home in front of a picture of his dead friend Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli who killed 19 Palestinians in a West Bank mosque, Mr. Ben-Horin considers for a moment how he would react to an order to leave his Golan home.

"We cannot obey. It's our land. It's Jewish land."

Another attitude prevails

at the Golan Heights winery outside Katzrin, one of

the region's most successful businesses.

Marketing director Doron Rand said he knows they may have to uproot the plant and the vineyards but in the meantime "there's enough time and room and money to be made."

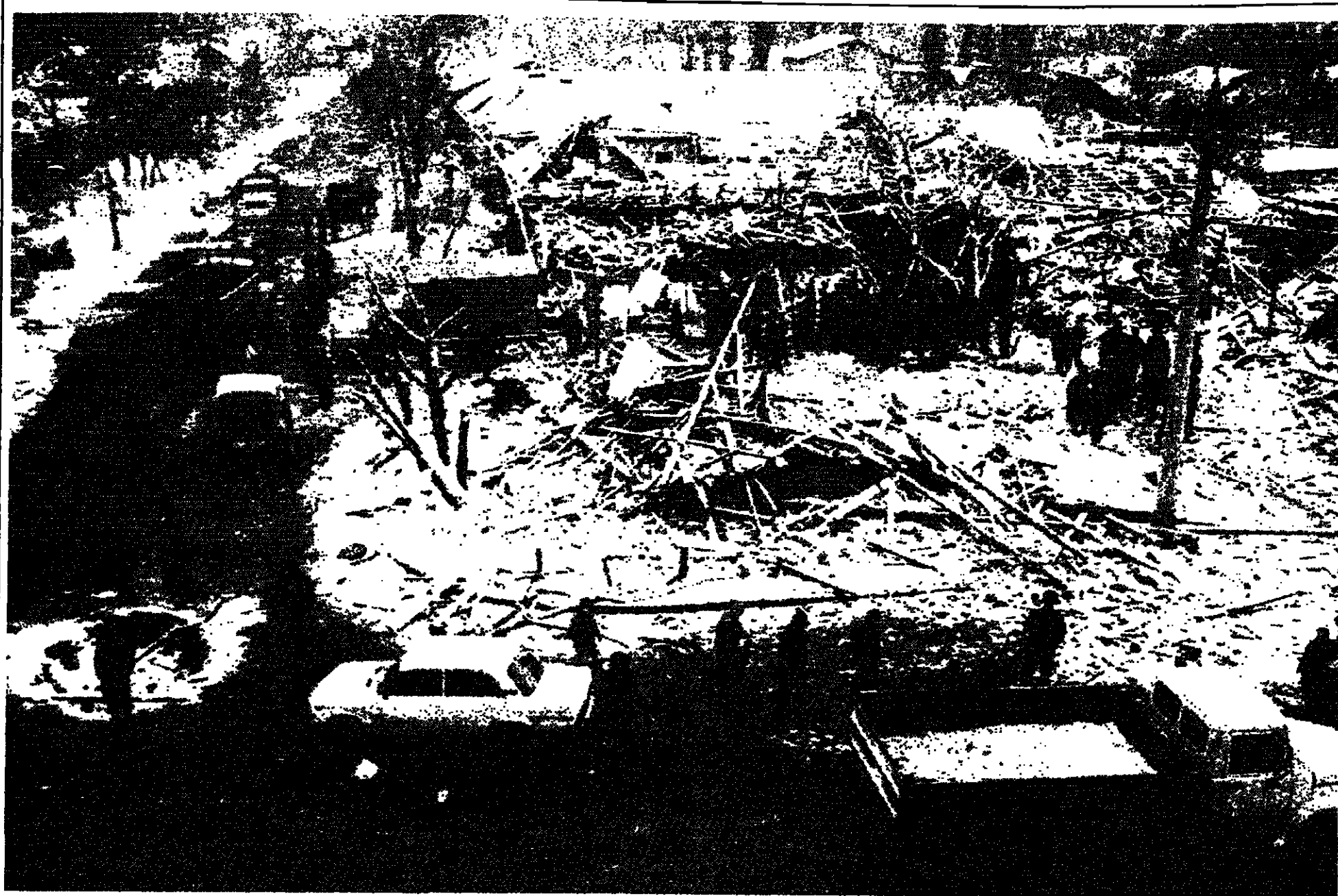
Executives, proud of their success in making a wine acclaimed internationally, show visitors new machines and a new wing of the building.

"This is strictly and purely a commercial decision," he said. Wine sales in 1995 netted \$11 million, including \$2 million in exports.

It may be possible to salvage the business but only through a joint venture with the Syrians by which they would tend the vines and sell them to the winery relocated in Israel.

A spokesman for some of the Golan's Syrian residents, the 18,000 members of the Druze minority who would stay in their homes under Syrian rule, said they were not concerned over what Israel left behind.

"First of all, we want all the settlers to leave the Golan Heights," said Taiseer Maray, director of the Arab Association for Development at the Druze village of Majdal Shams.



The destruction of Grozny have let many ethnic Russians homeless and bitter towards Moscow (AFP photo)

Life still tough for Chechenya's ethnic Russians

By Lawrence Sheets
Reuter

GROZNY — Russia's bloody attempt to crush Chechenya's independence bid is usually seen as a conflict between Moscow and the Muslim Chechen people, many of whom want to break free of what they consider a colonialist power.

But thousands of the shattered capital Grozny's once 150,000-strong ethnic Russian minority are caught in the middle of the conflict. Many have lost relatives and homes.

Once part of Chechenya's professional and intellectual elite, many of them are now destitute, victims of what they see as an in-

different and cruel government in Moscow which has forgotten them even exist.

"We have begun to realise that no one in the government gives a damn about us," says Lena Bogdanovich, who has lived for nearly a year in the damp cellar beneath her family's scorched apartment building, destroyed during Russia's massive artillery and air raids on the city last January.

Bogdanovich, a 52-year-old gastroenterologist, shares the tiny space with her 13-year-old daughter Katya and two other former tenants. A few salvaged belongings, including dishes, makeshift beds, and an oil lamp make up the furnishings.

One of the top medical

specialists left in the republic, Bogdanovich supplements her 500,000 rouble (\$110) monthly salary by selling newspapers to motorists passing through Grozny's icy streets.

Katya, in jeans and a ponytail and sporting a cast on her left arm, is a typical teenager, Grozny style. She broke her arm tripping over debris while running around the ruins. "The ruins are cool to hang out in," she says, oblivious to the irony.

Bogdanovich is no fan of rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, the former Soviet air force general chased into the republic's snow-capped mountains by the Kremlin's troops.

Nonetheless her most

scathing criticism is reserved for the Russian government, whose army levelled Grozny in the bombardment. It has since done little to restore the city or help find her a new home, despite promises from President Boris Yeltsin.

"When they started bombing, I guess they forget that there were people in here," she said bitterly. "If we're lucky, they clear the ashes out of the buildings they've destroyed."

Bogdanovich stayed in Grozny through the worst days of the fighting. Her elderly mother died of heart trouble during the heavy Russian offensive.

"At first we buried her in the yard because there were battles going on every-

where. When they stopped, we dug her up and moved her to the cemetery," she said.

Official figures from Russia's migration service show that some 600,000 people have fled their homes since Russia sent troops into Chechenya in December 1994.

The region had a population of around 1.2 million before the fighting began, including 400,000 in Grozny.

But unlike Grozny's ethnic Chechens, who with their strong extended family links usually have relatives to stay with in the countryside, many Russians have no close kin outside the battered city.

Many, like 47-year-old

Grozny artist Alexander Shatalov, who lost an eye when a shell exploded near him during the fighting, say they would feel like aliens in Russia itself and just want help from Moscow to restore the homes they lost. Many have Chechen accents although their only language is Russian.

Mr. Shatalov's single-storey house was destroyed last winter. He lived in the basement of the ruins until the weather turned cold, and now lives in a cellar he once used as a studio.

"My forefathers helped settle this area in the last century, and for me it will always be home," he said. "There is nothing waiting for us in Russia either."

Tourists lured to exotic land amid tales of Sinbad

By Lachlan Carmichael
Agence France Presse

MUSCAT — Oman has begun opening up cautiously to foreign tourists searching for golden deserts, lush green mountains, rocky coastline and the legend of Sinbad the Sailor. In the last five years this country on the southeastern tip of the Arabian peninsula has mounted a campaign to attract "up-market" Europeans, Asians and Americans who will respect the country's conservative Muslim traditions.

"Our principle in promoting (tourism) is to maintain our customs, traditions and culture," according to Mohsin Khamis, Al Balushi, director general of tourism at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Before Sultan Qaboos took power in 1970, Oman was one of the world's most closed countries which also retained medieval practices like closing the gates to the old fortified city of Muscat at sunset.

Sultan Qaboos immediately embarked on economic development using the country's oil revenues, but weak oil prices have forced him to turn increasingly to tourism and other sources of funds while still preserving Oman's character.

Mr. Balushi said the reason foreigners want to visit Oman is partly because it retains its identity: Omanis wear long robes and even modern buildings have the Arab, Islamic and Omani geometrical designs.

"They like the way we maintain our national

dress," said Mr. Balushi, who wears a long, white robe and coloured scarf wrapped around his head like a turban.

Many Omani men still wear daggers around their waists as they did centuries ago, and foreigners visit here for this "sort of Sinbad-the-Sailor type stuff," an Englishman working here said. Indeed, the northern coastal city of Sohar is promoted as one of the places where Sinbad, the character in the Thousand and One Nights, stayed during his adventures at sea.

Oman boasts 12,000 years of history and has come under the influence of the Phoenicians, Portuguese and British. More than 300 fortresses are dotted across the country, some dating to the 14th century.

Its varied landscape includes the virtually uninhabited Rub Al Khali desert, oases, rocky and sandy coastlines, and the wooded mountains of Dhofar which turn deep green during the June-September monsoon.

A total of 120,000 business travellers and tourists, mainly Arabs and European, visited Oman last year — a figure that has been growing at around 20 per cent a year since the campaign was launched, Mr. Balushi said.

Oman, a country of two million people which includes 600,000 foreign residents, is now starting to promote itself in Asia and the United States. It will stage seminars and handicraft exhibitions in Tokyo and Osaka in March.

"The Japanese have

started coming," according to Heide Beal, director of the tour group Gulf Explorers, which offers desert crossings, visits to archaeological sites and other trips tailored to customer requests.

But most Japanese tourists stay only four days and seem to prefer places like Dubai in the neighbouring United Arab Emirates where there are many shops and golf courses, she said.

Overall, tourism is limited in Oman because it is too hot and humid during the six summer months and hotels have trouble making profits when they are either empty or only five per cent full for much of the year, Mr. Beal said.

And the lack of hotels also limits the number of tourists, she said. "It's a vicious circle." Many people are also dissuaded by the costly air fares to Oman, which is far from Europe and Japan. An Omani businessman and a Western diplomat also said the government appeared at times hesitant to make the investments needed to expand tourism for fear of upsetting the country's traditional culture.

Omanis themselves voice fears that their country might become as open as the United Arab Emirates, where scantily dressed foreign women can be seen in shopping malls and other public places.

The Omani government is trying to strike a balance between tolerating other cultures and expecting foreigners to respect their own. The Western diplomats said. "That's at the nub of the tourism worry."

Shadow of the gunman returns to Belfast

By Martin Cowley
Reuter

BELFAST — Mickey Mooney's executioners struck with chilling ruthlessness as he sipped a drink in a Belfast bar.

Known to his associates as "moneybags", Mr. Mooney was the first victim of a nine-month spiral of killings in Northern Ireland's drugs underworld.

From the shadows of uneasy guerrilla truces, seasoned gunmen have emerged to deal death to small-time drug dealers and send dozens of terrified targets underground.

"The last thing we need is self-appointed vigilantes," said police drug squad detective inspector Larry Cheshire.

"Despite what the crimes may be or alleged to be, it certainly isn't the way any civilised society would want

to deal with its offenders," he told Reuters.

Security forces blame the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) for a self-styled anti-drugs purge that has claimed seven Roman Catholic victims, five of them in the past five weeks.

It's a bid for community control masquerading as a law and order crusade in depressed Catholic estates where the guerrillas have a traditional powerbase, say British security sources and moderate Catholic nationalists.

Republicans assert that the gunmen's "rough justice" is a response to a policing vacuum in strongholds where many Catholics mistrust the largely Protestant police force, and fear "a flood of drugs" ruining young lives.

Guerrilla war between IRA gunmen opposed to British rule and "loyalists" determined to defend it,

ended with matching truces in September 1994. The new deaths have jolted the uneasy calm.

Now a sinister new twist is fuelling concern after stop-go political momentum failed to capitalise on the truces.

Protestant extremists are getting in on the drug purge, according to an influential pressure group.

Security sources say they are treating seriously Republican and loyalist "death-list" threats to 24 named individuals.

The existence of the lists were disclosed by the influential pressure group, Families Against Intimidation and Terror (FAIT).

"It's a disgrace at a time of peace," FAIT founder Nancy Gracey said about the blood-letting.

Catholic grandmother Gracey is a thorn in the side of masked gangs who mete out brutal beatings to indi-

viduals deemed by Kangaroo courts to be thieves, burglars or muggers.

Her group monitors a rising tide of "punishment attacks," highlighting a vicious hidden side of the peace process.

The formidable campaigner said she had seen a death-list of 10 Protestants and Catholics, drawn up by the Protestant Action Force, a cover name for the banned Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

It threatens to "carbon copy" the violence of a group called "Direct Action Against Drugs" which Ms. Gracey says has 14 names on a death list. Both made a mockery of democracy, she declared.

Politicians and security forces are alarmed that if a Protestant falls victim to Catholics, he will be an easy prey among teenagers, jobless youths at street corners, or older groups look-

ing for a weekend "high".

"They are looked upon as social drugs. A lot of kids don't use alcohol but see nothing wrong in using "(Ecstasy)," said one Belfast drug scene observer.

Drug squad officers have had major successes.

In 1994, they seized 24,000 Ecstasy tablets. Last year the haul soared to 138,000 tablets. Cannabis seizures doubled. Arrests were also up.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, says the shootings point to a need for new political and policing structures.

Others detect a dark agenda to keep "foot-soldiers" active while cynically reminding Britain of their lurking menace.

"It is a process of acclimatising people to... a rolling resumption of violence," said Ken Maginnis, spokesman for the Protestant Ulster Unionists.

King visits Tel Aviv

(Continued from page 1)

Muasher said that this agreement will be put into force in the coming two months allowing vehicles to cross into Israel via the Sheikh Hussein Bridge and the Aqaba crossing and allowing the two sides to organise flights between Amman and Tel Aviv

at the rate of five flights a week.

Dr. Tarawneh meanwhile, said the two sides are fully committed to implementing the provisions of the peace treaty.

The award to be presented to the heads of the Jordanian and Israeli delegations is pre-

sented by an Israeli woman who owns the conference palace which overlooks the Lake of Tiberias where some of the negotiating sessions were held and where King Hussein and the late Prime Minister Rabin exchanged the instruments of ratification of the peace treaty.

Chechen rebels demand pullout

(Continued from page 1)

troops have been sleeping," Mr. Yeltsin spokesman Sergei Medvedev said the president took the raid as a sign separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev had chosen "not the peaceful solution but the path of force."

Mr. Yeltsin wanted "an

immediate end to Dudayev's provocations," Mr. Medvedev added.

The health minister of the autonomous Russian region of Dagestan told TASS that Chechen fighters were holding at least 1,000 hostages in the town of Kizlyar, a regional centre.

Earlier reports said the rebels had herded civilians

from nearby apartment houses into the central hospital compound, which also includes a maternity home.

Mr. Raduyev, reportedly Mr. Dudayev's son-in-law, told Dagestani officials trying to open negotiations that he would begin executions soon unless troops left both Chechenya and Dagestan.

TASS reported heavy street fighting across the town.

Palestinians issue warrant

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kidreh said the arrest warrant was distributed to Palestinian troops, including those at crossing points to Israel, Egypt and Jordan.

Israel radio, quoting Palestinian investigators, said Tuesday that the head of Israel's Shin Bet security services personally supervised the assassination, apparently from one of the Jewish settlements in the northern Gaza Strip.

The Shin Bet chief resigned Monday over the failure of his agents to prevent the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish militant two months ago.

Israeli newspapers suggested Tuesday that the agen-

cy chief, who can only be identified by the initial K, chose to wait until after the Ayyash assassination to announce his resignation. "Now that Ayyash has been removed from the arena... K can let the reins slip from his hands with a clear conscience," commentator Ron Ben-Shai wrote in the Davar Rishon daily.

A Palestinian newspaper, Al Bilad, meanwhile, claimed that Ayyash was still alive and that Friday's explosion was a ploy engineered by him to stop Israel's pursuit of him. The newspaper, quoting a Muslim militant close to Mr. Ayyash, said the man killed Friday was a Palestinian collaborator with Israel.

Jordanian Dead Sea hotels plan delayed by dispute

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Agreements to build four major hotels on the Dead Sea have been delayed by differences over the terms between the Jordanian government and investors, a Jordanian minister said Tuesday.

The signing of contracts with four groups of investors, which would have been the most visible investment since Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel, had been expected in November 1995.

Differences over future ownership of the hotels, terms of leases for state lands and demands for more incentives delayed the move, officials and investors said.

"We are studying the investors' demands within the context of our local investment law and other legislation, and we hope to complete our assessment on all points raised by mid-January," Water and Irrigation Minister Saleh Irsheidat told Reuters.

"We would love to have the agreements signed today... but all depends on agreement on the terms that have been set," said the minister, a member of a state committee examining investor demands.

The four hotels, to be built beside Jordan's only existing Dead Sea Hotel, are expected to cost around \$280 million. They are to be completed within three years of signing contracts.

Each hotel would have about 400 rooms and include health facilities to capitalise on the sea's therapeutic qualities for treating skin problems.

Officials say the four groups include both Jordanian and foreign investors, including one consortium involving the Marriott chain of the United States and one with Accor of France.

A third group includes the Hyatt chain of hotels and a fourth consortium is backed by a German company. Under terms originally set by the government, the

groups will lease state land for 30 years at an annual rent of 25,000 dinars (\$36,000) a hectare (\$14,400 per acre). The lease would be renewable.

The rent must be paid in advance in five-year instalments and rates are subject to revision every 10 years.

Investors say they would like the rent fixed and want a clause saying ownership of the hotels would be subject to negotiation after 60 years rather than going automatically to the state.

Jordan's side of the Dead Sea, which forms the border, was hardly used before the peace treaty with Israel. Amman would like to catch up with Israel, which has a health resort industry on its side of the sea with 2,000 rooms and plans for expansion.

The four hotels planned for the Jordanian side are part of an ambitious plan to build rooms for 8,000 people at the site by 2010, a scheme some officials say is unrealistic.

Jardaneh opens symposium on temporary admission for facilitating customs procedures

AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day regional symposium on Istanbul temporary admission agreement, organised by the World Customs Organisation (WCO), was held here Tuesday. Addressing the opening session, Finance Minister Basil Jardaneh said temporary admission encourages local and foreign investments because it facilitates commercial exchange and helps overcome customs barriers, including customs duties, thus reducing production costs.

Mr. Jardaneh said the Istanbul agreement seeks to adopt and ensure the implementation of simple specific international procedures, set to facilitate movement of goods and increase international capital, which in turn will contribute to improving standards of living and ensuring international prosperity. The implementation of this agreement requires that customs authorities develop their laws and regulations to allow for the smooth move-

ment of goods between the various countries, increase the flow of international capital and increase investments, Mr. Jardaneh said.

In a bid to improve temporary admission procedures, the Jordanian customs authorities last year adopted and implemented a programme, designed to develop the temporary admission regulation, through the simplification of customs procedures, computerising them and applying decentralisation.

Mr. Jardaneh thanked the WCO for organising the symposium in Amman and for intensifying cooperation among the organisation's member states in a bid to improve the gross domestic product for these countries. The WCO's coordinator thanked Jordan for hosting the symposium and renewed the organisation's commitment to serve its member states. She reviewed the organisation's objectives, saying that it aims to simplify

the work of customs administrations and ensure internationally-accepted mechanism capable of facilitating and encouraging world trade.

Customs Department Director-General Nazmi Al Abdullah said his department has signed the Istanbul, which entered into force in 1993. Mr. Abdullah noted that the Istanbul agreement, like other customs agreements, lay down international criteria and standards designed to facilitate commercial exchange, and that it does not interfere in the duties rates or amounts.

Taking part in the agreement are representatives for the customs departments in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Switzerland, Britain, Tunisia, Sudan, Algeria, Belgium, Yemen, International Chamber of Commerce, in addition to Israel and several specialised international federations.

Iraq to restructure economy

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's government is raising the cost of utilities and state services and plans new taxes in a campaign to restructure an economy devastated by U.N. sanctions, residents said.

Iraqis, striving under hyperinflation to make ends meet, have been told the state can no longer provide high subsidies.

Ministries that once charged a few cents for their services are raising their fees, taking cost and profit into account.

An international call, which used to cost less than 100 dinars (about four U.S. cents), could now go up to 30,000 (about \$10) for three

minutes. The cost of installing a new phone or telex has risen to up to two million dinars from a maximum of about 60,000.

Residents say the government is discussing ways of increasing revenues through direct taxes. President Saddam Hussein, in an effort to fight rampant tax evasion, has pledged to give taxmen financial incentives in line with the money they collect for the state.

Income tax may be expanded to include more people.

"They (government) realised that they cannot go on propping up the economy by printing more and more

money. They were afraid that they could reach a state where their money could become worthless," said a Baghdad-based diplomat.

U.N. relief officials said inflation for essential commodities in Baghdad was running at more than 5,000 per cent because of trade sanctions imposed on Iraq, including a block on oil exports, following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The diplomat said Iraq needed to revamp its banking system, raise interest rates and remove obstacles to private investment.

The government is trying to withdraw excess money from circulation. Advertisements published in the newspaper Babel, owned by President Saddam's eldest son, Uday, offer a variety of state items for sale — cars, machines, cars, steel, refrigerators, electric ovens and other household goods.

The government has told ministries to get rid of 25 per cent of their vehicles. These include personal limousines used by President Saddam and his presidential office as well as vehicles of the Military Industrialisation Commission (MIC).

Even state property is offered for sale. The ministry of finance is selling land and an MIC advertisement in Babel offers a forest for sale.

Traders said the state had more assets for sale than at any time since the start of the Gulf War almost five years ago. But one said demand for such items was slack as most traders were taking a wait-and-see attitude.

Money changers said it seemed the new measures had halted a precipitous slide in the dinar's value which hit a record low of 3010 to the dollar a week ago but was trading at 2885 Monday.

President Saddam told his ministers in a meeting late last year and made public early in 1996 that the government should fight inflation with all means.



An Iraqi citizen in Baghdad Monday carries 280,000 Iraqi dinars after exchanging them for \$100. Exchange bureaux were allowed for the first time by the central bank to buy foreign currency at the black market rate. Previously the bureaux had to buy foreign exchange at a rate agreed with the state of 1,000 dinars to dollar (AFP photo)

He ordered a freeze in salaries and recruitment of new personnel. The government is said to have stopped printing new money and told ministries to adopt tough belt-tightening measures. Residents said they expected power and water fees to go up to meet costs. Petrol prices were also likely to surge.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Patch up a disagreement with your attachment and have a delightful time together. Perfect some final talent you have which could bring prosperity.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can improve the situation at home today if you don't harp on an old subject which could produce hostility. Control your temper.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't permit some word obstacle to upset you this morning and then later the evening you can handle correspondence and travel matters well.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan early today how to solve monetary difficulties and then work constructively on them. Don't forget to have some pleasant and quality time with your loved ones.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Go after your personal wishes and gain them and you can settle home affairs at this time. Seeing good pals at their home is wise today.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan your romantic life as you want it to be with the approval of your mate and later don't be sarcastic with any one else or there could be difficulties.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be with a final pal who understands you and forget some monetary advisor who is off the beam today and could provide you with erroneous information.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Early start how to make your world status more enviable and forget that frustration which is bothering you at this time.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't hang on to some concept which could keep you from getting into profitable activities which could make you very successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study the promises you have made to others and keep those which are most important to you and success and forget going after some personal goal.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A good-hearted man can be of assistance you if you show you a willing to follow suggestions given to you by this individual.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your career activities can go along very nicely you adhere to policy level and do not disagree with low associates you come contact with.

Birthstone of January: Garnet

net — Rose Quartz

Algeria liberalises foreign exchange trade

PARIS (R) — Algeria has started an interbank foreign exchange market as a step towards liberalisation, Algeria's central bank said Monday.

A statement said that the new currency market started on Jan. 2 and exists in the spot and forward forms.

"The dinar's rate is defined on the market by the free game of offer and demand with an active role of banks and financial establishments," the statement, sent to Reuters, said.

The interbank system replaces the central bank's fixing system introduced in October 1994 when the authorities last introduced more flexibility into the exchange rate.

It allows banks to sell dinars to non-resident banks against convertible foreign currencies, to sell foreign currencies against dinars from convertible accounts, to purchase and sell freely convertible currencies, and to purchase and sell currencies and dinars at the interbank market, the central bank said.

Except for hydrocarbon and mining export revenues, which are managed by the central bank, banks will be allowed to keep for them-

selves export receipts, credit and loans contracted by themselves or their clients, and foreign exchange operations earnings, it added.

It said the interbank foreign exchange market will work continuously during business days with operations carried out through telephone, telex and other electronic systems.

Banks must have an electronic system enabling them to know "immediately" their overall position and in each foreign currency, the central bank said.

"The interbank foreign exchange market... comes in the context of the liberation of imports in 1995 and the switch to the (dinar's) convertibility for current operations," it said.

Algeria won debt relief totalling more than \$20 billion from the Paris Club of government creditors and the London Club of commercial bank creditors in 1994 and 1995, backed by two loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to stabilise its balance of payments.

Last month, the central bank was quoted as saying that currency reserves were \$2.3 billion in the second-quarter of 1995.

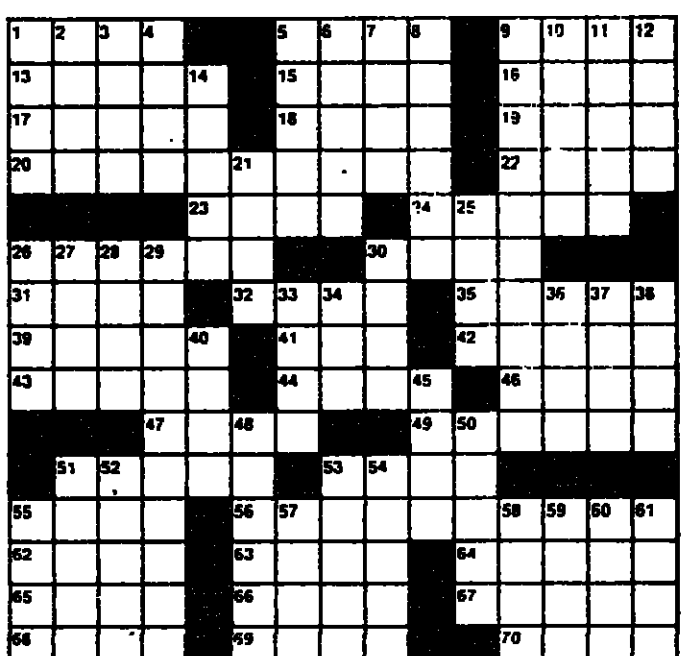
THE Daily Crossword by Evelyn Benshoof

ACROSS

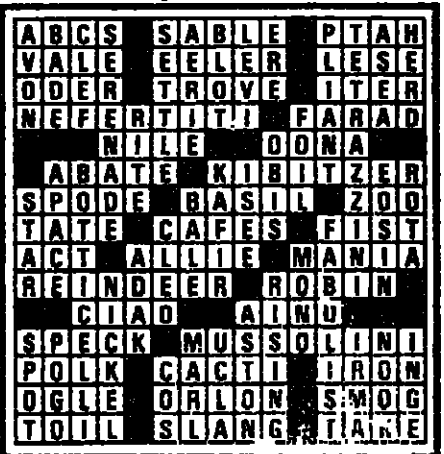
- 1 George or Artie
- 5 Wrong
- 9 Nineties
- 13 Sharpened
- 15 Cheese
- 16 "— a ship sailing"
- 17 Think
- 18 Radames' love
- 19 Samoan port
- 20 Business risk taker
- 22 Coin
- 23 Scenarist James
- 24 Family circle member
- 26 Gum component
- 30 Ophidians
- 31 Zhivago's love
- 32 Emerge
- 35 Control exclusively
- 39 Incensed
- 41 Negative
- 42 Florida city
- 43 Prescribing punishment
- 44 Stretches (out)
- 46 Lab gel
- 47 Boast
- 49 Puissant
- 51 Painter John French —
- 53 Let it stand
- 55 Truant
- 56 Askew: dial
- 62 Son of Leah
- 63 "— Bede"
- 64 Pay increase
- 65 Pindar's poems
- 66 "Cool Hand —"
- 67 Complete
- 68 Semester
- 69 Sly look
- 70 Fictional plantation

DOWN

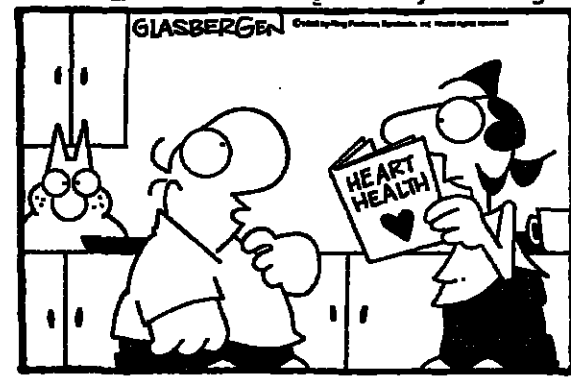
- 1 Point out
- 2 Indian
- 3 Indigo dye
- 4 Proceed
- 5 Fade away
- 6 Compose
- 7 Harass
- 8 Hankers
- 9 Blue-eyed feline
- 10 Jellied garnish
- 11 Patriotic Thomas
- 12 Hit
- 14 Transfer picture
- 21 Matured
- 25 — facto
- 26 Trim
- 27 — and hounds
- 28 Qum's land
- 29 Body process
- 30 Wager
- 33 Again
- 34 Cooking vessel
- 36 Engage in
- 37 — Bator
- 38 Role
- 40 A Fitzgerald
- 45 Gush
- 48 Readily available
- 50 Japanese city
- 51 Certain European
- 52 Romeo
- 53 Wager
- 54 More docile
- 55 Many
- 57 Together musical
- 58 — — — — —
- 59 — — — — —
- 60 — — — — —



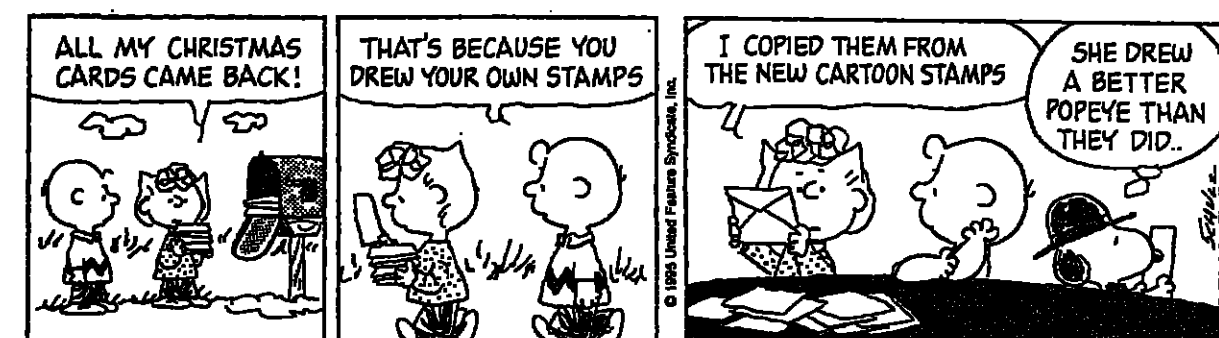
Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



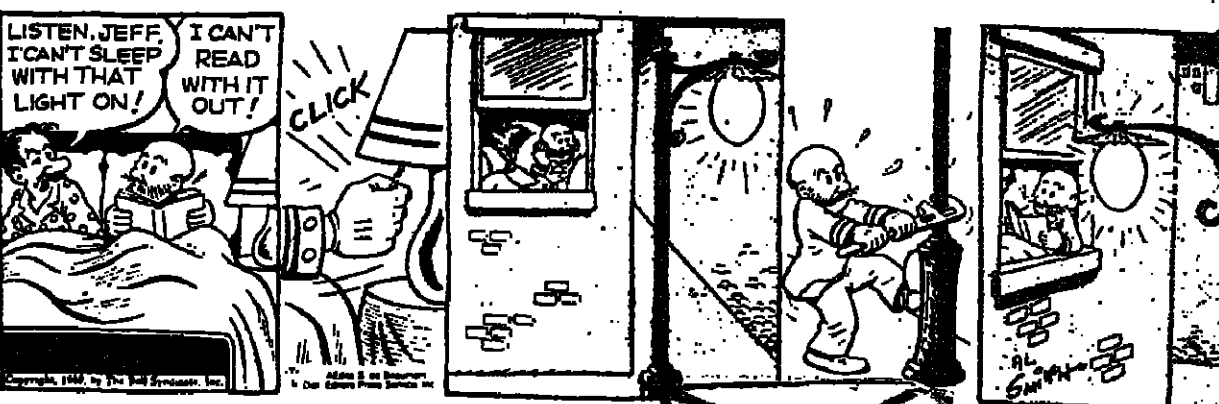
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Lockheed to buy bulk of Loral in \$10b deal

NEW YORK (R) — Lockheed Martin Corp. will buy the bulk of defence giant Loral Corp. in a deal worth more than \$10 billion, butressing its position as the nation's largest aerospace and defence company, both firms announced Monday.

The deal, the latest in the shrinking defence industry, sent Loral's stock soaring 24 per cent. It will put Loral's core defence electronics and systems integration business in Lockheed's arsenal and

boost its total sales to about \$30 billion.

The remaining satellite and telecommunications businesses of New York-based Loral will be reorganised into a new company, called Loral Space and Communications Corp., in which Lockheed Martin is also buying a 20 per cent stake.

Under the agreement, Lockheed will pay \$7 billion in cash, or \$38 for each Loral share, through a tender offer due to begin by Friday. It will

also assume \$2.1 billion in debt.

The remaining Loral space unit will be spun off to Loral stockholders, who will receive one share of Loral Space for each Loral share they own.

Lockheed will take a 20 per cent stake in Loral Space for \$344 million and provide the company with support in key technologies. Loral Space will begin business with over \$700 million in cash and no debt.

The transactions, which have been unanimously approved by both companies' boards of directors, have an estimated value of over \$10 billion, the companies said.

Loral's stock soared \$8.625 to \$44.875 on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), where it was among the most active issues in early afternoon trading. Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed rose \$3.125 to \$80.50, also on the NYSE.

"The strategic combination with Loral solidifies Lockheed Martin's leadership

position as a world premier high technology company," said Daniel Tellep, chairman of Lockheed Martin.

"It enhances our technology base, improves our competitiveness, expands our global reach and provides new opportunities for growth," he added.

The deal comes on the heels of last week's announcement that Northrop Grumman Corp. would buy the defence electronics business of Westinghouse Electric Corp.

Malaysia Airlines gives \$4b deal to Boeing

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Boeing Co clinched a \$4.0 billion order from Malaysian Airlines System (MAS) Tuesday, shutting out rival Airbus Industrie from the booming Asia-Pacific market for the second time in as many months.

"There could only be one winner," MAS Chairman Tajudin Ramli told a news conference after announcing the order for 25 passenger jets. "We can't afford to have too many different types of aircraft."

It was the second mega-order won by the Seattle-based aircraft manufacturer in as many months. In November, Singapore Airlines announced a huge \$12.7 billion contract for 77 new Boeing 777-200B passenger jets.

That formed part of 346 new orders awarded worldwide to Boeing in 1995, with an announced value of \$31.23 billion.

Mr. Tajudin said the orders for 15 Boeing 777s and 10 747-400s would cost around 10 billion ringgit (\$4.0 billion).

The first Boeing 777 is expected to be delivered in May 1997 and the first 747-400 in September 1997. The remaining aircraft will be delivered on a staggered basis by the year 2001.

The airline also took an option to buy an additional three 747-400s and two 777s. Mr. Tajudin said Rolls Royce engines would power the Boeing 777 aircraft. The Boeing 747-400s would use engines made by United Technologies unit Pratt Whitney.

Rolls Royce said in a statement from Singapore the order was worth \$475 million.

Mr. Tajudin denied the order was awarded to Boeing instead of the Toulouse, France, -based Airbus because of a row with France over landing rights in that country for MAS.

"The only signal is that this (Boeing) is the one that meets our particular needs," he said.

McDonnell Douglas Corp also put in a losing bid for the Malaysian purchase.

Private placement subscription opens for increasing capital of major Lebanese company

AMMAN (J.T.) — Lebanon Invest SAL, Beirut and Capital Trust Limited, London as joint lead managers announce the opening of the private placement subscription period for the increase of capital of Societe des Grands Hotels du Liban SAL in January 1996 and until March 17th, 1996.

According to Mr. Yasser Toukan, projects manager at Union Investment Corporation, the total number of sale shares in the offering is 16,750 shares, at an offer price of \$1.875 per share, of which 6675 per share is the new investors contribution to the capital increase. The total placement will amount to \$35.64 million, where the minimum investment unit is 150 shares for a total consideration of \$281,250.

The company owns two

hotels, the 96-room Vendome Intercontinental five-star hotel, which will begin operation in March 1996 and the 572-room Phoenicia Intercontinental Hotel, which was the most famous hotel in the Middle East in the sixties and seventies, the reconstruction of which will begin in 1996.

Mr. Toukan added that Messrs Mazen and Marwan Salha presented control 86.49 per cent of the company and the selling 31.72 per cent of the company to new investors in this private placement.

Upon the closing of the private offering, completion of the capital increase, and the asset revaluation of the company, each investment unit will become 45,895 shares with a net asset value of \$6.23 per share.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3606/16	Canadian dollar	1.4328/38
	1.4428/38	Deutsche marks	1.6162/72
	1.6162/72	Dutch guilders	1.1676/86
	1.1676/86	Swiss francs	29.68/72
	29.68/72	Belgian francs	4.9439/89
	4.9439/89	French francs	1575.6/7.1
	1575.6/7.1	Italian lire	105.00/10
	105.00/10	Japanese yen	6.5990/90
	6.5990/90	Swedish crowns	6.3510/60
	6.3510/60	Norwegian crowns	5.5753/53
	5.5753/53	Danish crowns	1.4235/45
	1.4235/45	Singapore dollars	0.7445/50
	0.7445/50	Australian dollars	7.7328/38
	7.7328/38	Hong Kong dollars	

One sterling \$1.5494/04
One ounce of gold \$394.95/395.25

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
BOOSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - STOCK MARKET				
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 09/01/1996				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	STOCK MARKET
ARAB BANK PSC	320	70090	234.000	232.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1580	1580	1.000	1.000
BANK OF JORDAN	250	925	3.700	3.700
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1220	1220	1.000	1.000
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2050	2050	2.520	2.520
THE JORDANIAN BANK	1300	1300	1.000	1.000
JORDAN GULF BANK	21575	21575	1.000	1.000
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1980	7204	3.630	3.640
JORDAN BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	1550	1550	2.900	2.900
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	100	354	3.500	3.500
BEST BANK SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	90000	288000	3.210	3.210
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12790	11501	900	890
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	10082	14253	1.450	1.410
BANKS SECTOR	142677	433227	INDEX NUMBER: 185.68	CHANGE: -0.414
JORDANIAN INSURANCE	1000	2780	2.000	2.700
INSURANCE SECTOR	1007	2807	INDEX NUMBER: 130.20	CHANGE: -0.094
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	15062	26155	1.750	1.740
JORDAN MINERAL	150	342	2.350	2.280
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	5000	28000	5.600	5.600
JORDANIAN SHIPPING LINES	750	1965	2.570	2.520
REGIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2400	4220	1.750	1.750
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	14800	14945	1.020	1.010
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONDOMINIUM HOTELS	850	1828	2.170	2.150
ARAB ENTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	30000	106273	3.580	3.540
JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY	4100	5009	1.220	1.220
JORDANIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	10300	23660	2.290	2.290
UNITED CO FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	4200	4235	1.040	1.030
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.				
SERVICES SECTOR	87612	216750	INDEX NUMBER: 128.81	CHANGE: -0.084
ASTANCO CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2000	2400	1.200	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	7571	27635	3.650	3.600
JORDAN FERTILISER MINES	560	3058	5.400	5.270
THE ARAB POTASH	150	807	5.400	5.380
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	2130	23769	10.230	10.200
WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	500	700	1.400	1.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	4880	17605	3.580	3.700
THE JORDAN MORTUARY KILLS	1800	13860	7.700	7.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	750	3295	4.420	4.280
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	2107	17053	8.070	8.120
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	200	470	2.350	2.350
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	515	3887	7.500	7.500
ARAB MORTUARY KILLS	1500	2340	1.500	1.500
LEVESTOCK & POULTRY	4219	4219	890	890
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	7100	10092	1.420	1.430
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	750	1245	1.650	1.660
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	1450	1450	1.020	1.020
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1000	1628	1.640	1.620
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	450	1718	3.770	3.830
KANCHAR INVESTMENT	100	155	1.540	1.560
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	10750	34830	3.240	3.250
JORDAN INVESTMENT RESOURCES CO.	2300	6559	2.000	1.980
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	1700	2387	1.420	1.400
EL-BAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	23900	37152	2.320	2.280
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	18750	25780	1.390	1.370
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	1750	1995	1.100	1.090
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	92634	241311	INDEX NUMBER: 122.35	CHANGE: +0.124
GRAND TOTAL	323930	894096	INDEX NUMBER: 154.31	CHANGE: -0.164
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	164460			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	151918			

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DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordanians prefer foreign currencies despite higher interest rates on the dinar

★ JORDANIANS STILL prefer to hold foreign currencies despite high interest rates on the dinar to make it more attractive for investment, former Central Bank deputy governor Maher Shukri says. He notes that foreign currency deposits at licensed banks had risen by 10.9 per cent, or the equivalent of JD 214 million, during the first nine months of 1995 out of a total increase in deposits by JD 282.5 million or 5.2 per cent. This means that deposits in dinars only increased by 2.1 per cent only or JD 68.5 million.

Dr. Shukri, who is now vice chairman and general manager of the Amman Bank for Investment, says that interest rates have risen sharply and the trend is still for higher levels or at least expected to remain high for a period that could prove to be extended. He points out that the real interest (the market rate less than the rate of inflation) on short-term dinar deposits, which has reached five per cent, is extremely high by all standards as it competes with real interest rates on main foreign currencies in addition to a margin of no less than two per cent to encourage Jordanians to save in dinars.

Dr. Shukri indicates that the preference of Jordanians to hold their savings in dollars instead of dinars and to cover their needs for dinars by borrowing will put pressure on interest rates to rise further. "This can bring up the penalty for investing in dollars to levels exceeding the prevailing range between five to nine per cent and, as such, force people to return to dinars after losing the penalty in light of the stability of the Jordanian dinar," he explains. Under the trend for higher interest rates, Dr. Shukri says, investing in long-term bonds and even in shares, will be more risky and will result in more losses.

According to the senior banker, the monetary policy has resulted in higher investment and borrowing costs. He explains that the cost of money for banks has reached 10.75 per cent and that "if any bank places half of the liquidity it obtains from other banks into certificates of deposits in dinars it should extend credit at an interest rate of 18.5 per cent to achieve an adequate three per cent profit."

Noting that the declared growth for 1995 is six per cent and that the natural population growth is 3.5 per cent, Dr. Shukri says that the difference of 2.5 per cent growth should, relatively speaking, be felt by the people in better living standards. But, he adds, such an improvement is not showing and, instead, living standards are retreating and the purchasing power is falling to such a level that poverty is on the rise.

He attributes this situation to two factors; first, price levels and the rate of inflation are higher than what is being announced. Second, he points out, is that the distribution of wealth is uneven in the society with a small minority holding most of the wealth.

Reviewing other economic sectors, the banker sees the markets in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and the Arab Gulf as more important for the Jordanian economy than the Israeli market and he indicates that because of the prevailing situation in Iraq and other factors resulting from the Gulf war, nearly 40 per cent of Jordan's industrial capacity is not utilised.

He adds that the greatest challenge yet to come is the competition that will be faced by the Jordanian industries upon entering the international markets through the World Trade Organisation (Al Aswaq).

Financial Markets

In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 9/1/96	Tokyo Close 9/1/96
Sterling Pound*	1.5525	1.5503**
Deutsche Mark	1.4387	1.4387
Swiss Franc	1.7619	1.7655**
French Franc	4.9365	4.9355**
Japanese Yen	105.20	105.14
European Currency Unit	1.2943	1.2889**

* USD For STG
** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Source: 9/1/1996

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.37	5.31	5.25	5.12
Sterling Pound	6.31	6.31	6.25	6.18
Deutsche Mark	5.56	5.50	5.37	5.37
Swiss Franc	1.67	1.56	1.50	1.50
French Franc	4.56	4.62	4.62	4.62
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.31	0.35	0.43
European Currency Unit	5.06	4.93	4.95	4.87

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Source: 9/1/1996

Precious Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	396.05	7.70	Silver	5.55	0.100

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 9/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0971	1.1026
Deutsche Mark	0.4918	0.4945
Swiss Franc	0.6083	0.6113
French Franc	0.1434	0.1441
Japanese Yen*	0.6756	0.6760
Dutch Guilder	0.4392	0.4414
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira*	0.0450	0.0452
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

* Per 100

Other Currencies

Bahraini Dinar	1.6620	1.6780
Lebanese Lira*	0.04400	0.04460
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8330	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma*	0.2675	0.3175
Cypriot Pound	1.5825	1.5985

Weah named FIFA Player of the Year

MILAN (AFP) — George Weah, who once played soccer with a ball made of rags on the poor streets of Monrovia, was voted FIFA's 1995 World Player of the Year here Monday night.

Weah garnered a total of 170 votes, more than double those polled by his two rivals, AC Milan teammate Paolo Maldini (80) and Bayern Munich ace Jurgen Klinsmann (58).

But the modest Liberian immediately turned the spotlight away from himself, calling onstage his former coach at Monaco — Arsene Wenger.

"I love a lot of people," Weah said. "My family, my friends and the people I play with. But when I came to Europe, you were a father to me. I stayed for five wonderful years and you made me a professional."

After handing Wenger a personal gift, Weah added: "A good man should be rewarded and I can't pay for what he gave me. He always told me: 'If you work with me, one day you'll be a great player.'"

It was an emotional tribute to Wenger, one of France's finest coaches, who has since moved to Japan.

Weah, who has also been voted 'Player of the Year' by the African Football Confederation and 'European Player of the Year' by France Football magazine, was picking up his second prize of the evening.

Minutes earlier, he had received 'The Golden Star' award as best African footballer, from Afrique Football magazine.

"I'm really happy, really satisfied, but I don't want that feeling to stop me from working hard," he said.

I want work harder. I pray to God that all these awards don't change me and that I stay the same George Weah and don't think that I'm better than everyone else.

"I want to be a symbol for African football, to be a good



AC Milan's Liberian striker George Weah (left) receives an award after he was named World Player of the Year by FIFA at a ceremony in Milan on Monday. The recognition rounded off an extraordinary year for

Weah, acclaimed as "King George" in Italy and already voted European and African player of the year, who joined Milan this season from Paris St. Germain (Reuters photo)

example to young players — that hard work and discipline can make you someone."

Weah, who will be playing in the African Nations Cup which starts in South Africa next weekend, follows in the

footsteps of four previous FIFA winners — Brazilian Romario, Italy's Roberto Baggio, Dutchman Marco Van Basten and German Lothar Matthaus.

Weah has risen to the chal-

lenge of the world's top football championship, the Italian Serie A, following his move from French side Paris St. Germain during the summer.

With 10 goals for his new

club so far this season, Weah has already established himself as coach Fabio Capello's first choice as centre-forward, backed up by Bagio and Montenegrin Dejan Savicevic.

The FIFA award is decided by votes from about a 100 national coaches around the world, who are asked to give their first, second and third choices.

The evening, organised here as part of the centenary celebrations for the Milan-based Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper, also saw Frenchman Jacques Glassman pick up the FIFA Fairplay Award for revealing the French first division Marseille-Valenciennes match-rigging scandal in 1993.

Glassman, visibly moved, thanked FIFA "for thinking of me."

After leaving Valenciennes, where his contract was not renewed, Glassman failed to find another club in his own country. He is now in virtual exile on the French island of La Reunion in the Indian Ocean.

The Gazzetta handed out two prizes of its own, a career award for AC Milan and Italy's defensive veteran Franco Baresi, now 35, and an award for the best emerging player in Italy, Juventus' talented 21-year-old playmaker Alessandro Del Piero.

Further FIFA prizes went to World Cup holders Brazil, as best team, and Jamaica, as best mover, after soaring up the FIFA rankings — from 96 to 40.

Top ten players in the FIFA player of the year award made Monday:

1. George Weah (Lib) 170
2. Paolo Maldini (Ita) 80
3. Jurgen Klinsmann (Ger) 58
4. Romario (Bra) 50
5. Roberto Baggio (Ita) 49
6. Hristo Stoev (Bul) 37
7. Ivan Luis Zamorano (Chile) 36
8. Juninho (Bra) 28
9. Matthias Sammer (Ger) 23
10. Michael Laudrup (Den) 20
11. Gianfranco Zola (Ita) 20

Ekaterina Gordeeva a lonely soul after death of Grinkov

MOSCOW (AFP) — Ekaterina Gordeeva cuts a lonely figure at Moscow's CSKA Ice Palace these days. She works out not to prepare for competition but to take her mind off the death of her husband and skating partner, Sergei Grinkov.

"I did not come here to practise," said Gordeeva. "I just come here to skate. I can't stay home all the time. It's too depressing. I need to do something to keep my mind off all the things that happened to me recently."

Grinkov died of heart failure while the couple was practising on November 20 in Lake Placid, New York. He was buried in Moscow after a funeral service on the rink at CSKA.

The arena was home to Gordeeva for over a decade, after she first came to train with Stanislav Zhuk aged 12. The renowned Soviet coach paired her with Grinkov, four years her senior, and in 18 months the couple won their first world title, in 1986 in Switzerland.

Now she skates alone.

"I come here almost daily while my mother babysits for Daria, who is 3 years and 3 months old," said Gordeeva, currently living with her parents, who help look after her daughter.

"I started to skate at CSKA, and almost my entire athletic career was spent here. I know everyone here and people know me very well. They comfort me. I feel better here than just sitting at home, doing nothing," she explains.

The 24-year-old stole the hearts of skating fans the world over when she and Grinkov skated to their first world title, she charmed them all with her looks, bubbly personality and ever-present smile, even after the most difficult on-ice performances.

But the smile is gone with the loss of Grinkov and she now looks older than her years.

"I don't know what I'll do in the future. Probably, I'll continue to skate because this is the only thing I've done my whole life and I don't know anything else. Although, it is hard for me to say at this moment, where, when and in what capacity I'll resume my skating," she explains tearfully.

More concrete answers about her skating future will have to wait for the hurt to fade a little, but coach Zhuk believes she can return to competition.

"I think it's possible for Ekaterina to come back with a different partner if she decides to," said Zhuk. "Not only in professional shows but in competition as well."

He said it is a common for a skater to change partners mid-career. But it is rarer for a couple, after winning world Olympic titles, to split and then achieve similar success with new partners.

One who did succeed is Gordeeva's compatriot Irina Rodnina, three-time Olympic and 10-time world pairs champion, who also coached by Zhuk.

Rodnina and her partner, Alexei Ulanov, separate after winning the gold at the Sapporo Olympics, when Ulanov fell in with another skater whom he eventually married.

Soviet sports leaders ordered figure skaters to look for a country-wide search to replace Ulanov.

"We tried about a dozen different pairs before looking at Alexander (Zaitsev)," Zhuk. "Zaitsev was about to give up skating as he was deemed a lousy prospect by his coaches."

But Zhuk's intuition paid dividends almost immediately.

"In 10 months, 'Sasha' went from a beginner to world champion," he reminisces. Rodnina and Zaitsev went on to win Olympic and eight world titles in the 1980s.

But Zhuk said it would be much less likely that Gordeeva could make the switch to pairs to singles skating.

Gordeeva says she will stay in Moscow in mid-January, before going to the United States with her daughter.

"I'll stay there with my coach (Mikhail Zueva). We know each other very well. I'm most comfortable with her," she says. "She'll help me cope with the situation and give advice on my skating future."

Until Grinkov's death, the coach and young family rented a house together in outside Hartford, Connecticut while the couple skated with the Stars on Ice show.

The show is putting on a benefit performance Feb. 27 in Hartford, with all proceeds going to Gordeeva and her daughter.



Andre Agassi with his shaven head during a press conference on Monday, before the Australian Open tennis tournament, which starts Jan. 15 in Melbourne. Agassi said he shaved his head just before leaving his home in Las Vegas, U.S., and is confident of holding on to his Australian Open title. Agassi defeated Pete Sampras in the final last year, despite having played only one tournament in four months (Reuters photo)

African Nations' Cup troubled as Guinea officially withdraw

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — The troubled build-up to the African Nations Cup continued Monday when Guinea officially withdrew from the tournament which starts here on Saturday.

Guinea had been selected by the African Football Confederation (CAF) to replace defending champions Nigeria, who withdrew at the weekend citing fears for the safety of their players.

CAF spokesman Ismail Bhamjee told AFP that an

emergency meeting of the cup organising committee on Tuesday morning would decide which country joins Zaire, Gabon and Liberia in Group C.

Guinea, chosen because they had the best record of the non-qualifiers for the 16-team African showpiece, gave no official reason for declining an invitation to play in the Indian Ocean city of Durban.

But CAF sources said close political ties between the

country and Nigeria probably contributed to a change of heart after the Guineans initially agreed to travel.

The Guinean ambassador to Egypt, Mohammad Kourouma, told an official at the Cairo headquarters of the CAF that his country did not have sufficient time to prepare.

Observers also believe there were political undertones behind the withdrawal of Nigeria, whose execution of nine minority rights activists last November drew sharp criticism from South Africa.

President Nelson Mandela led international condemnation of the hangings and called for an oil embargo of the mineral-rich west African state.

Uganda are next in line for a call-up if the CAF continues to seek a replacement among countries who finished in the qualifying groups, followed by Senegal, Malawi and Morocco.

But South Africa's SAPA news agency reported Bhamjee hinting at a country closer to South Africa, which could lead to Zimbabwe making a first appearance at the tournament.

Zaire, favourites to win Group C after Nigeria pulled out, are the only finalists to have arrived with coach Munshin Ertugal saying a semi-final spot is within the capabilities of his young squad.

In slamming six goals past Uganda and five past Tanzania and Ethiopia, the Pharaohs looked awesome, but they only drew at home and lost away to midweights Algeria.

The one-goal loss in Algeria could be explained by the last-minute resignation of Dutch coach Nol de Ruiter, who feared for his safety in a city hit by civil war.

With Mohsen Salah in charge and 100,000 supporters backing them, the Pharaohs were expected to exact revenge at home. They struggled, however, and had to come from behind to snatch a point.

Egypt then unleashed their frustrations on Uganda, who were buried under an avalanche of goals with Ahmed Al Kass getting three to finish leading scorer in the qualifying competition.

The national team used to consist almost exclusively of players from Cairo giants Zamalek and Al Ahly, but under Salah the net broadened considerably.

This policy has been maintained by Roud Krol, a Dutch star from the Johan Cruyff era, who moved in above Salah after guiding Egypt to the All-Africa Games gold medal.

Krol relies heavily on local talent with the major exception being Hnai Ramzy, a polished defender whose outstanding performances at the 1990 World Cup earned him contracts in Switzerland and Germany.

Group A (Johannesburg unless stated)

Jan. 13 — South Africa v Cameroon 1500; Jan. 15 — Egypt v Angola 2000; Jan. 18 — Cameroon v Egypt 2000; Jan. 20 — South Africa v Angola 1430; Jan. 24 — South Africa v Egypt 1430; Cameroon v Angola 1430 (Durban).

Group B (Bloemfontein unless stated)

Jan. 14 — Zambia v Algeria 1430; Jan. 15 — Sierra Leone v Burkina Faso 1430; Jan. 18 — Algeria v Sierra Leone 1430; Jan. 20 — Zambia v Burkina Faso 2000; Jan. 24 — Zambia v Sierra Leone 2000; Algeria v Burkina Faso 2000 (Port Elizabeth).

Group C (Durban unless stated)

Jan. 14 — AN Other v Zaire 2000; Jan. 16 — Gabon v Liberia 2000; Jan. 19 — Zaire v Gabon 2000; Jan. 21 — AN Other v Liberia 2000; Jan. 25 — AN Other v Gabon 1430; Zaire v Liberia 1430 (Johannesburg).

Group D (Port Elizabeth unless stated)

Jan. 14 — Ivory Coast v Ghana 1700; Jan. 16 — Tunisia v Mozambique 1430; Jan. 19 — Ghana v Tunisia 1430; Jan. 21 — Ivory Coast v Mozambique 1430; Jan. 25 — Ivory Coast v Tunisia 2000; Ghana v Mozambique 2000 (Bloemfontein).

Quarter-finals

Match 1 (Johannesburg)

Jan. 27 — Winners A v runners-up B 1430

Match 2 (Bloemfontein)

Jan. 27 — Winners B v runners-up A 2000

Match 3 (Port Elizabeth)

Jan. 28 — Winners D v runners-up C 1430

Match 4 (Durban)

Jan. 28 — Winners C v runners-up D 2000

Semi-finals

Match 5 (Durban)

Jan. 31 — Winners 2 v winners 3 1430

Match 6 (Johannesburg)

Jan. 31 — Winners 1 v winners 4 2000

Third place (Johannesburg)

Feb. 3 — Losers 5 v losers 6 1330

Final (Johannesburg)

Feb. 3 — Winners 5 v winners 6 1630

Tunisians brimming with optimism

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian team is again brimming with optimism going into the African Nations Cup finals despite being dogged by problems in recent months.

They beat French team Olympique Marseille last month in a friendly match to boost their confidence, but even so are not seriously expected to cause a major upset in the tournament, which opens in South Africa this Saturday.

The Tunisians are placed in rough Group D in Port Elizabeth with former winners Ghana, the Ivory Coast and outsiders Mozambique.

Their star player Jamel Limam played down their chances when he admitted: "Tunisia is just a challenger."

Their preparations for Africa's soccer showpiece had started with pessimism: Six senior players said they would not be able to go to South Africa because of injuries, and defeat in a friendly against Zambia in Lusaka last month brought gloomy predictions in the Tunisian press of a possible catastrophe.

To add to their difficulties, the schedule of matches at the Nations' Cup finals partly coincides with the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

The Tunisian team's 6-1 victory over Marseille on December 28 did cause a surge of optimism.

"There are good chances for Tunisia to go very far in the finals," Marseille's coach Gerard Gili predicted after his club's defeat in Tunis.

But Tunisia's coach Henry Kasperczak was much cautious.

"The result is just able to make players regain confidence... but one should keep cool," the Polish-born coach said.

Kasperczak has put the team through an intensive training regime, including trips to Morocco and Egypt to try to get better coordination between the players, several of them newcomers.

Zaire avoid tough start

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Zaire have avoided a potentially tough start to the African Nations' Cup in Durban after defending champions Nigeria pulled out of the event.

The countries met at the quarter-finals stage of the previous two tournaments with the Nigerians winning 1-0 in Senegal and 2-0 in Tunisia through goals from Rashidi Yekini.

Belgian-based Zairean captain and midfielder Kabeya Mukanya, whose forceful personality extends to ignoring instructions from the national coach, believes the Leopards can progress beyond the last eight.

With thousands of his countrymen now living in South Africa, they should be among the best supported teams and could justify the "dark horses" tag placed on them by international observers.

Yet, one year ago, Zaire appeared out of the running for a place at the biggest soccer show staged in Africa following a home draw with Malawi and losses in Cameroon and Zimbabwe.

In a remarkable turnaround, the Leopards travelled to previously unbeaten Malawi and won through a goal from Liombia Essende, another professional from Belgium.

